

Richardson, Barbauld, and the construction of an early modern fan club

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**‘Richardson, Barbauld, and the Construction of an
Early Modern Fan Club’**

Annie Watkins

**Thesis Submitted For The Degree of MPhil (2011)
Queen Mary, University of London**

DECLARATION

I, Annie Watkins, declare that this thesis is entirely my own work, written in my own words.

Signed:

Date:

ABSTRACT

Much has been written about the life and long works of the eighteenth century epistolary novelist, Samuel Richardson, but the prospect of his position as the first celebrity novelist – responsible for courting his own fame as well as initiating his own fan club – has largely been ignored. The body of manuscripts housed at the National Art Library in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London provides the modern scholar with evidence of the skeletal beginnings of an early fan club. This thesis aims to show how these manuscripts were turned into a saleable commodity by the publisher and entrepreneur Richard Phillips, while under the guiding hand of another, slightly later, literary celebrity, Anna Laetitia Barbauld. In order to restore Richardson's reputation amongst a new nineteenth century audience, Barbauld was required to construct her own idea of him as an eighteenth century celebrity author, and in doing so the insecurities of a self-professed, apparently diffident man, are revealed. Barbauld's capacious, but heavily edited selection of letters is analyzed in this thesis, providing ample evidence that Richardson's correspondents were more than just eager letter writers. By using Barbauld's biography of Richardson this thesis aims to show how she manipulates the genre of life writing in her construction of him.

This thesis offers an alternative reading of how the Richardson manuscripts are viewed, redefining them as not simply a collection of letters, but as a collective entity, deliberately selected and archived as evidence of an early modern fan club, and its celebrity managing director.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project such as this can never be completed single-handedly, and it would be unfair of me to imply that this was the case.

I would like to thank all of the staff at the British Library, particularly those in the Maps reading room and the Rare Books and Music reading room who have always managed to provide me with calm efficiency, and a steady flow of books. The staff of the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum allowed me to peruse, at my leisure, the wonderful manuscripts letters of Samuel Richardson which presented me with the idea for this thesis. The Bodleian Library at Oxford was also a great resource for me, and its staff was never anything but welcoming, helpful and professional. Perhaps my favourite haven was the Cambridge University Library, where many hours were spent reading through first editions of *Clarissa*, whilst pondering over why anyone would take on such an enormous task.

This brings me to the focal point of this dissertation: Samuel Richardson, who at times I have loved and, at times, loathed. His works and letters are truly amazing.

I would like to take a moment to thank both Queen Mary, University of London, and the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters for providing me with a much needed, and these days rare, studentship.

To my wonderful friends and family I thank you for your patience, understanding, unrelenting faith, and of course, your love. I could not have done this without you. Special mention has to go to Molly MacDonald, Amy Culley, Sarah Hussain, and Pete Langman – you all rock!

As for my dissertation supervisor, Professor Markman Ellis, I cannot quite sum up what I need to say. Words truly are not enough. Thank you for your direction, your wisdom, your kindness, your enduring faith in me, and your friendship (not to mention the endless cups of tea). Thank you.

Finally, I would like to thank my hero: my kind, and very patient, partner Francis whose determination and courage never ceases to amaze me. Thank you darling.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>OED</i>	Oxford English Dictionary
<i>ODNB</i>	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
<i>MM</i>	Monthly Magazine
	National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Forster	Forster Collection, National Art Library
BOD	Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
CUL	Cambridge University Library
<i>Correspondence</i>	<i>The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison. Selected from the Original Manuscripts, Bequeathed by him to his Family, To which are prefixed, A Biographical Account of that Author, and Observations on his Writings</i> , ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1804)
<i>Pamela</i>	<i>Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded. In a Series of Letters from a Beautiful Young Damsel to her Parents: and Afterwards in her Exalted Condition, between her, and Persons of Figure and Quality, upon the most Important and Entertaining subjects, in Genteel Life</i> (London: No name, 1740-41)
<i>Clarissa</i>	<i>Clarissa or, The History of a Young Lady: Comprehending The Most Important Concerns of Private Life And particularly showing the distresses that may attend the misconduct both of parents and children in relation to marriage. Published by the Editor of Pamela</i> (London: S. Richardson, 1747-8)
<i>Sir Charles Grandison</i>	<i>The History of Sir Charles Grandison in a series of letters. Published from the Originals by the Editor of Pamela and Clarissa</i> (London: S. Richardson, 1753-54)

He worked over his correspondence, preparing it for possible eventual publication. Even before he began to write *Pamela* he had saved the letters of such correspondents as Aaron Hill and Dr. Cheyne. During the 1740's he began to keep copies of the letters he wrote. Especially after the publication of *Clarissa*, when he was making new friends and probably writing and receiving more letters than before, he made a more or less systematic effort to preserve his correspondence. That part of it which is still extant shows that he went over it late in life, arranging it in volumes, sometimes with indexes, deleting passages he did not consider suitable for publication and disguising names.

T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, pp. 436-437.

INTRODUCTION

The Editor, Her Publisher, and The Media Machine

*Fame, or celebrity, is the grand principle upon which the choice of subjects for a general biography must be founded; for this, on the whole, will be found to coincide with the two chief reasons that make us desirous of information concerning an individual, - curiosity, and the desire of enlarging our knowledge of mankind. But under the general notion of celebrity many subordinate considerations arise.*¹

In late February 1804 the London-based author, bookseller and publisher Sir Richard Phillips (1767-1840), furnished with his newly acquired private correspondence of the novelist Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), had approached Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743-1825) with a proposition that she found hard to refuse.² Phillips proposed to hand over the largely studied archive to Barbauld and award her the opportunity of making a selection of her preferred letters. By making a selection, she was to form an edition, to be published by him, and to include her own account and ‘the first full-length study of’ Richardson.³

Barbauld’s edition is made up of six very readable volumes, packaged together by Phillips in three leather-bound duodecimo volumes. The work comes complete with portraits, drawings, examples of hand-written letters, a comprehensive index (at the end of volume six) and a contents page which elucidates each new volume. The edition’s aesthetic is designed to seduce its reader into the appropriate climate for the embarkation of a journey through the life and letters of, arguably, the first ever celebrity novelist: Samuel Richardson.

¹ Lucy Aikin, *Memoir of John Aikin, M.D.*, 2 vols, I (London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1823), p. 21.

² William McCarthy, *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Voice of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), p. 412. A few years earlier (around 1796) Barbauld had worked on the *Monthly Magazine* with Phillips, and her brother John Aikin, but some time around 1801, she had rejected Phillips’ proposal to reprint a selection of her essays from the *Monthly Magazine* (McCarthy, p. 372).

³ T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel. *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 533. Even though Anna Barbauld is accepted as the first biographer of Richardson, there was an account of Richardson printed in 1782 by John Nichols. The information contained in this account is thought to have come from John Duncombe, a friend and correspondent of Richardson.

By focussing on Richardson and his obsessive accruing of, and narrating in, letters, this thesis aims to ask questions about his need for recognition. The juxtaposition of Richardson's often dismissive attitude toward the fashionable celebrity-driven world of the eighteenth century, and his desire for fame and appreciation, is undisputed by previous Richardson scholars and this thesis in no way attempts to merely reproduce their findings.⁴ However, what it is aiming to do is further confirm earlier hypotheses, and progress the argument by entering into a dialogue about how Richardson's corpus of letters is viewed. I make the claim that they are fan mail.

In the years after his death in 1761 Richardson's popularity was beginning to flag by the 1780s, and by the early nineteenth century his eagerly sought after fame had reached its lowest ebb. Alan Dugald McKillop argues that:

“he was [not] admired indiscriminately and invariably by the English public” [...] After the publication of *Grandison*, indeed, there were signs that his reputation had suffered a check, and about the year of his death, 1761, his fame in England was somewhat below its high point of a decade before. Booksellers' records of sales of copyrights seem to show that in the sixties Smollett's novels were commercially about as valuable as Richardson's, and that in the next decade the copyrights of the major novels of Richardson, Smollett, and Fielding (with the exception of *Amelia*) were valued at about £70 a volume for the standard editions in duodecimo. A list called “Books Printed by the Booksellers of London and Westminster [...]” tells us that the duodecimo editions of *Tom Jones* and *Grandison* were four years in selling, *Pamela* and Smollett's *Don Quixote* five, and *Clarissa* six. Perhaps the most surprising implication here is that *Grandison* was more

⁴ The subject of Richardson's vanity is much discussed by Eaves and Kimpel (pp. 520-521, p. 533), and Barbauld takes issue with ‘his touchiness and pride towards the upper classes’ (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 533). Both Johnson and Lord Byron also make reference to Richardson's vanity, with Johnson paying particular attention to Richardson surrounding himself with flatterers (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 533, and John Carroll, ed, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 14). To a large extent Richardson's vanity can be attributed to a significant inferiority complex, which will be discussed throughout this thesis. Richardson enjoyed the glories of fame, and Carroll tells us that ‘he revelled in admiration from great men’, and that his ‘consequent love of flattery were heightened by the company of the famous and aristocratic.’ (Carroll, p. 14). Richardson willingly ‘gave much of himself and his time to his pride of correspondents. Even casual acquaintances [...] received lengthy and careful answers’, showing that he courted his own popularity and fame (Carroll, p. 29). Alan Dugald McKillop quotes from a remark that Richardson made in 1752: “Twenty years ago I was the most obscure man in Great Britain, and now I am admitted to the company of the first characters in the kingdom.” (Alan Dugald McKillop, *Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 3).

popular than we might expect, *Clarissa* somewhat less popular.⁵

McKillop goes on to argue that Richardson was never able to ‘regain [ed] the position he held about 1750, when he had first claim to the attention of almost every reader’.⁶ With these statistics set in place it is fair to assume that Phillips was left to find ways of recouping the money that he had spent on his latest purchase.⁷ At the same time as Richardson’s fame was waning, Anna Barbauld’s reputation was at its zenith and her ‘contemporaries were not slow to compare her to [Samuel] Johnson.’⁸ Having worked with Barbauld on the *Monthly Magazine* Phillips would have recognised this, so what better way to entice an infinitely increasing reading audience than to employ the esteemed Anna Barbauld to help restore Richardson’s reputation. Not only was she shy like Richardson, but she was a living representation of what he had struggled to become some sixty years earlier: a middle-class celebrity writer. McCarthy describes Barbauld as ‘an “organic intellectual”’, and he offers Terry Eagleton’s explanation of what that means:

Organic intellectuals [...] “are the product of an emergent social class [...] provid[ing] the link or pivot between philosophy and the people, adept at the former but actively identified with the latter.”⁹

Richardson was part of the developing eighteenth century middle-class, and it could be argued that, due to his humble youth and subsequent success as a novelist and business man, he is a worthy example of someone who contributed toward the successful emergence of the intellectual atmosphere that Barbauld had been born into.¹⁰ Richardson would have been euphoric at the prospect of being

⁵ McKillop, p. 227. McKillop continues his findings by changing the March 1792 figures of sale into pounds per volume: ‘*Tom Jones* [is] ahead with a figure of 28; [...] *Grandison* 16, *Pamela* 15½, *Joseph Andrews* 13, *Peregrine Pickle* 12½, *Clarissa* 11½.’ (McKillop, p. 227).

⁶ McKillop, pp. 227-228.

⁷ Due to a fire in 1861 quantities of Phillips’ papers were lost which may have provided us with essential information about Phillips, including the possible purchase price of Richardson’s manuscripts (McCarthy, p. xviii).

⁸ McCarthy, p. x.

⁹ McCarthy, p. x.

¹⁰ McCarthy makes the point that ‘To leaf through an issue of the *Monthly* under Aikin’s editorship is to experience middle-class liberalism at its most receptive and exploratory.’ (McCarthy, p. 371)

referred to as an “organic intellectual”, but would have been as satisfied just to associate himself with someone who indisputably was. As we shall see later, Richardson actively surrounded himself with persons of repute and social standing, seemingly even in death.

The Editor: Anna Laetitia Barbauld (née Aikin)

By the time Richard Phillips had approached Anna Laetitia Barbauld, with a view to editing his latest project, her reputation as an educator and poet had reached its zenith. Her contributions to the literary world of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had brought her fame and, at times, unwelcome celebrity status.

By the latter half of the eighteenth century Anna Barbauld had successfully published numerous works, including *Poems* (1773), *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose* (1773) - with her brother John Aikin - and *Devotional Pieces, compiled from the Psalms and the Book of Job: to which are prefixed, Thoughts on Devotional Taste, on Sects, and on Establishments* (1775). These works had catapulted her to immediate fame, and she was heralded as the latest rising hope, securing her position amongst the literary elite of the eighteenth century. Barbauld's desire for fame is indubitable, and Anne Janowitz notices her assured disposition: ‘There is something both charming and appalling about the 30-year-old Anna Barbauld's apparent self-confidence and lack of self-consciousness.’¹¹ William McCarthy also confirms that ‘Despite her shyness – and her sex – Barbauld was not afraid to act as a public citizen.’¹² However, instead of forging ahead down the path of an attention seeking literary personality, she chose a route which was to cement her as a defining female voice of the Romantic age: child education. Barbauld wanted a respectable fame and, unlike other female contemporaries, for example Mary Robinson, she kept her reputation intact by choosing a route where both renown and esteem were on offer, and whereby she was able to maintain complete control.

To imply that Richardson was as liberal as the Aikins would be to greatly exaggerate the truth, but it can be argued that Richardson's appreciation and promotion of the female mind certainly assisted in the progression of liberalist thinking (for further discussion see later chapters of this thesis).

¹¹Anne Janowitz, *Women Romantic Poets: Anna Laetitia Barbauld and Mary Robinson* (Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2004), p. 26.

¹² McCarthy, p. x.

Barbauld's decision to move into the realms of pedagogy began in the late 1770's when she recognised the need for a separate genre specifically designed for children. Up to this point there had only been the late seventeenth century chapbooks which heeded a severe warning to children who were unwilling to conform.¹³ Prior to the mid-eighteenth century there had been no narrative-driven story books written for children between the ages of six and twelve, and although nursery rhymes, fairy stories, *Aesop's Fables* (620BC-560BC) and tales such as Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) were extant there was little more available. The appearance of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719, followed a few years later by Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726, amended 1735), marked a turning point for children of a certain age (specifically those between the ages of eleven and sixteen), but even these carried profound political messages.¹⁴ Barbauld's *Lessons for Children* entered a rapidly changing market in books for children, and while the tiny books (16°) went through multiple re-printings in their early years, 'Parents bought those books by the thousands'.¹⁵ *Lessons for Children of Two to Three Years Old* (1778), *Lessons for Children of Three Years Old* (1778), *Lessons for Children of Three to Four Years Old* (1779), *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781), *Lessons for Children, Part Three* (1787) and *Lessons for Children Part Four* (1788) soon found direct competition, with books such as Dorothy Kilner's *The Life and Perambulations of a Mouse* (1785) and Mary Jane Kilner's *Jemima Placid* (1786), Sarah Trimmer's *Fabulous Histories* (1786), and Maria Edgeworth's *The Parent's Assistant* (1796) entering the fray.¹⁶ The market became flooded with literature for children, and it was Barbauld who had pioneered the idea. By recognising a fissure in the market and fundamentally building on the eighteenth century idea of the conduct book, coupled with the increasing popularity of moral narrative fiction, Barbauld, like Richardson before her, had introduced a new genre, but this time primarily for children.

Anna Barbauld's fame and success was never in abeyance because of her digression into the world of child education; she just simply took another route. James Boswell catalogues Samuel Johnson's reaction to Barbauld's digression:

¹³ For further information see M. O. Grenby, 'Chapbooks, Children, and Children's Literature', *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* (September 2007), 277-303.

¹⁴ It should be noted that neither of the works by Swift and Defoe were intended for children of any age, but they ended up being unwittingly appealing to them.

¹⁵ McCarthy, p. ix.

¹⁶ All of these books by Barbauld were published in London by J. Johnson.

I hate by-roads in education. Education is as well known, and has been as well known, as ever it can be. Endeavouring to make children prematurely wise is useless labour. Suppose they have more knowledge at five or six years old than other children, what use can be made of it? It will be lost before it is wanted, and the waste of so much time and labour of the teacher can never be repaid. Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed. Miss _____ [Aikin] was an instance of early cultivation, but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding school, so that her employment now is, "To suckle fools and chronicle small beer". She tells the children, "This is a cat, and that is a dog, with four legs and a tail; see there! You are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak." If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the *Congress*.¹⁷

Johnson's bitter annoyance at Barbauld's apparently wasted vocation is suggestive of a disappointed mentor. McCarthy draws attention to the similarities between the two: 'her career resembled that of a male writer in her time. In its range [...] her work resembled Samuel Johnson's, and contemporaries were not slow to compare her to Johnson'.¹⁸

Barbauld's interest in didactic literature greatly reflects her family background, as she was very much part of a dynasty of practical educators and innovators in a period of theoretical stasis. Her family, on both sides, were fervent dissenters with colourful ideas on edification, and her father's career as tutor of the classics meant that Barbauld was introduced to some of the most prominent, influential and impressive thinkers of the time, for example Joseph Priestley, William Enfield and Gilbert Wakefield.¹⁹ Barbauld was to remain life-long friends with Priestley

¹⁷ James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson, together with Boswell's Journal of a tour of the Hebrides and Johnson's Diary of a Journey into North Wales*, ed. by George Birkbeck Hill, revised by L. F. Powell, 2nd edn, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 408-9. Johnson is wrong here when he refers to Rochemont Barbauld as a 'Presbyterian parson'; he was a Unitarian minister.

¹⁸ McCarthy, p. x.

¹⁹ Diana K. Jones, 'John Aikin: Tutor and Theological Scholar', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>> [accessed 16 March 2010]. David L. Wykes, 'John Jennings: Independent Minister and Tutor', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>> [accessed 16 March 2010]. William McCarthy, 'Anna Laetitia Barbauld: Poet and Essayist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>> [accessed 16 March 2010]

and his wife Mary, and whilst Priestley considered Barbauld to be ‘a woman of an excellent understanding, much improved by reading; of great fortitude and strength of mind’, he was, at times, uncomfortable with her ideas.²⁰ Barbauld’s thinking had been greatly influenced by Elizabeth Singer Rowe, but as Norma Clarke tells us:

While Rowe’s male contemporaries had eagerly caught at the flames of enthusiasm issuing from her pen, the men of Barbauld’s time were anxious to repudiate it. Joseph Priestley and Gilbert Wakefield were uncomfortable with arguments that assumed a resemblance between religious devotion and love, even ‘that fanciful and elevated kind of love which depends not on the senses’ [...] In tracts championing emotion in religion against what she called the mechanical ‘systematic spirit’ of Priestley and others, Barbauld faithfully reproduced the spirit of Elizabeth Rowe, though her version of the erotic in religious feeling was mild by comparison with her predecessor. Still, it upset men.²¹

The ‘early cultivation’ that Johnson had previously criticised in Barbauld’s upbringing had begun to reap its rewards as she unashamedly began to challenge the ideas of her male contemporaries, forging ahead with her own compelling ideas. However, she also realised that whilst her ‘peculiar education’ had on the one hand ‘entitled her to some of the freedoms men had’, she was at the same time redressing that balance by ‘obey [ing] the dictates of the ‘female reserve’.²² Barbauld played the game, realising that ‘it was not in her interest to do anything which might, as she saw it, ‘provoke a war with the other sex’.²³

Shortly after her marriage to Rochemont Barbauld in 1774, the couple moved to Palgrave near Diss on the Suffolk and Norfolk border, and here they set up a small school which achieved immediate success. In her memoir of Barbauld, her niece, Lucy Aikin, discusses its triumph:

the rapid and uninterrupted success which crowned this undertaking [Palgrave School] was doubtless in great measure owing to the literary celebrity attached to the name of Mrs.

²⁰ Grace A. Ellis, ed., *Memoir, Letters, and a Selection from the Poems and Prose Writings of Anna Laetitia Barbauld*, vol.1 (Boston: J.R. Osgood & Co., 1874), pp. 27-28.

²¹ Norma Clarke, *The Rise and Fall of the Woman of Letters* (London: Pimlico, 2004), p. 315.

²² Clarke, p. 317. Barbauld was taught at home by both of her parents.

²³ Clarke, p. 316.

Barbauld, and to the active participation with her husband in the task of instruction.²⁴

Barbauld's fame and reputation was securely positioned amid the realms of the literary world of the late eighteenth century. Before she began writing literature for children, Barbauld published a selection of short prose pieces that were stimulated by the *Psalms* and the *Book of Job*, and her *Devotional Pieces* appeared in 1775. Thus far Barbauld had published continuously on consecutive years since 1772, and had gained the reputation of a writer who was in-tune with others, one who wrote with feeling, and about commonality. It was around this time in her life that Barbauld began to understand her own genius, as Dick Wakefield argues:

She understood why the novelist had an appeal over that of the philosopher or scientist, but she herself did not have the sustained invention of the novelist. She had a genius for seeing the point, and expressing it in easy flowing style, therefore, the ideal medium for her proved to be the essay, or discourse, as she termed some of them.²⁵

Barbauld's understanding of, and liking for, the genre of novel writing, coupled with her abilities as an essayist, made her the ideal candidate for the position of editor of Richardson's immense archive of letters. However, McCarthy thinks that she may have been surprised by the commission, claiming that her brother 'John Aikin might have seemed a more obvious choice to manage such a large job'.²⁶ McCarthy ponders the idea that Aikin could well have suggested Barbauld to Phillips.²⁷

Barbauld's time at Palgrave was occasionally interrupted by trips to London, where she was openly celebrated. In 1775 she was immortalised in a cameo portrait by Josiah Wedgwood, and in 1778 'the great woman' been one of the nine ladies chosen by Richard Samuel for his painting the *Nine Living Muses of Great*

²⁴ Lucy Aikin, ed., *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, with a memoir by Lucy Aikin*, 2 vols, I (London: Longman & Co., 1825), pp. xxiv-xxv.

²⁵ Dick Wakefield, *Anna Laetitia Barbauld* (London: Centaur Press, 2001), p. 36.

²⁶ McCarthy, p. 413.

²⁷ McCarthy, p. 413.

Britain.²⁸ Whilst in London, Barbauld moved in the social circles of William Blake, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Henry Fuseli and Thomas Paine, as well as with some of the 'nine muses' and original Bluestockings: Hester Chapone, Catherine Brooke, Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Carter. Before long the Barbaulds settled permanently in London.

Whilst living in London there was another shift in Barbauld's working pattern, and it became increasingly more important for her to share her political voice. The early part of the 1790s saw the emergence of Anna Barbauld's otherwise sheltered political views. *An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts* appeared in 1790 under the pseudonym 'A Dissenter', shortly followed by *Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq. on the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade* in 1791, to which Barbauld openly gave her name.²⁹ *Civic Sermons to the People* appeared in 1792, along with *Remarks on Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's Enquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public or Social Worship*, and in 1793 her *Sins of the Government, Sins of the Nation; or, a Discourse for the Fast, appointed on April 19, 1793* appeared anonymously.³⁰

A new edition of Mark Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination* marked another turning point in Barbauld's career, for the first time she was 'a writer for hire.'³¹ Barbauld's edition of Akenside's poem appeared in 1794 with an introductory essay, a critique of the poem and an insight into the content of Akenside's work. This was followed in 1797 by a shorter critique and introductory essay of the *Poetical Works* of William Collins which, according to McCarthy, 'was received as respectfully as her Akenside preface by the two journals that noticed it. Reprints, however, were far fewer.'³² In the same year her semi-didactic poem *To Mr. S. T. Coleridge*, appeared.³³

²⁸ McCarthy, p. 393. Josiah Wedgwood's son had been a pupil at the Warrington Academy where Barbauld's father had taught previously. The other eight muses were Hannah More (1745-1833), Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800), Elizabeth Linley Sheridan (1754-1792), Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), Charlotte Lennox (1729/30-1804), Elizabeth Griffin (1727-1793) and Catherine Macaulay (1731-1791). Barbauld is to the left of the painting stood alongside the writer Elizabeth Carter, behind the artist Angelica Kauffman (see copy of the portrait in this thesis).

²⁹ Wakefield, p. 65.

³⁰ Barbauld signs this 'A Volunteer'.

³¹ McCarthy, p. 366. Barbauld's first commission came from the publishers Cadell and Davies.

³² McCarthy, p. 369.

³³ Lucy Aikin, pp. 209-211. Samuel Taylor Coleridge had met the Barbaulds in August 1797 and, according to McCarthy, he had 'dazzled her' (McCarthy, p. 400). Barbauld 'took on the role as mother-mentor' to Coleridge; however, McCarthy warns us that 'She did not know what she was

Just prior to the public disclosure of her as a literary critic Barbauld had encountered her future employer, Richard Phillips, who had set up a monthly periodical alongside her brother John Aikin. Barbauld began contributing to the *Monthly Magazine* immediately, offering her brother an essay for its first issue that she had written some three years earlier; according to McCarthy the ‘Submitting of elderly material was accepted practice.’³⁴ Due to the common usage of anonymity and pseudonymity by authors it is impossible to determine exactly how much work Barbauld did for the *Monthly Magazine*.³⁵ However, her work at this time does include: “What Is Education?” (*MM*, March 1798); “Memoir of Thomas Mulso” (*MM* 7, 1799); “Orthophilus” (*MM*, 1802); Memoir of Hester Mulso Chapone (*MM* 13, 1802); “Opprobrious Appellations Reprobated” (*MM* 14, 1802); “Thoughts on the Inequality of Conditions” (probably written in 1801, but published in *Athenaeum*, 1807); “A Review of The Plays of Joanna Baillie” (*Annual Review*, 1802); “To the Editor” (*Norwich Iris*, December 1803); “Preliminary Essay” (*Selections from the Spectator*, Tatler, Guardian, and Freeholder, 1804).³⁶ By this time Anna Barbauld was sufficiently prepared for her largest commission to date: Richardson’s Manuscripts.

Her Publisher: Sir Richard Phillips

At the time of the publication of Richardson’s *Correspondence*, Richard Phillips was an eminent, albeit infamous, publisher and business man with a system that, arguably, positioned him within the realms of ‘entrepreneur scallywag’.³⁷ Experienced in both publishing and marketing, one of Phillips’ wily marketing methods is described by John Issitt:

getting into’ as some years later Coleridge was to publicly attack her in his London lectures of 1808 and 1812 (McCarthy, p. 402 and p. 445).

³⁴ McCarthy, p. 373. The first issue of the *Monthly Magazine* appeared on 1 March 1796.

³⁵ McCarthy, p. 372.

³⁶ McCarthy, p. 382, p. 39, p. 644 and p. 676. McCarthy states in his notes that Barbauld’s review of Baillie’s plays can be found in the *Annual Review* 1803. I have discovered that it is in the *Annual Review* of January 1802.

³⁷ John Issitt, ‘Introducing Sir Richard Phillips’, *Paradigm: Journal of the Textbook Colloquium*, 26, (October, 1998) <<http://faculty.ed.uiuc.edu/westbury/Paradigm/%20Phillip.html>> [accessed 22 March 2010]. Phillips had not been knighted at this point; he was honoured by King George III on 30 March, 1808.

For living authors whose names Phillips used, I have not been able to discover whether the author wrote the books themselves, or whether Phillips commissioned somebody else to write the work and came to an arrangement over the use of the name. For deceased authors however, Phillips' tactics were simple and highly profitable. He would commission a writer on a fixed fee to produce a text and then either publish it himself or sell it on to another publisher. He would then produce 'keys' and 'copybooks' related to each work, therefore generating a range of related products, which, he claimed, constituted a 'system' of education. Once the textbook was purchased, the keys and the copybooks, which were fairly simple and cheap to compile, represented further highly profitable potential sales.³⁸

Phillips' passion for the development of education, as well as his passion for making money, led him to form many radical associations in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literary circles, one of which was with the Aikin family.³⁹ Some time after arriving in London in 1765, Phillips had met Barbauld's brother, John Aikin, and together – along with some input from Anna Barbauld – they set up the *Monthly Magazine*.⁴⁰

Comparatively little has been written about Richard Phillips, but those who have produced work on him prefer to focus on his more adverse side by painting

³⁸ Issitt, 'Introducing Sir Richard Phillips'. Thomas Seccombe also alludes to this tactic in his article on Phillips in the *ODNB* (see Thomas Seccombe, 'Phillips, Sir Richard (1767–1840)', rev. M. Clare Loughlin-Chow, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>>[accessed 4 March 2008])

³⁹ Richard Phillips was responsible for writing and printing the 1820 pamphlet *The Interrogative System*, a nineteenth century version of what we now know as York Notes. He engaged expert writers in various fields, one of which was the science textbook writer Jeremiah Joyce (1763–1816), to compile instructive books which according to the title page of one of the copy books was 'printed on writing paper with spaces for the answers' (Issitt, 'Introducing Sir Richard Phillips'). In the preface to one of the exercise books, the Rev. S. Barrow's *Five Hundred Questions on the New Testament* (1816), the book claims to be the only one of its kind written in order to exercise 'THE THINKING FACULTY in the young student' (Issitt, 'Introducing Sir Richard Phillips').

⁴⁰ McCarthy, p. 370. The *Monthly Magazine* was to be based upon its predecessor The *Gentleman's Magazine*. Richardson was a friend and correspondent of Edward Cave the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which had given all of Richardson's novels fair and supportive reviews. The *Gentleman's Magazine* had also backed Richardson over the Irish piracy of Sir Charles Grandison in 1753. The *Monthly Magazine* first appeared on 1 July 1796. John Aikin was assigned to the position of editor and he remained there until a dispute with Phillips forced him to leave in 1806. He was replaced by George Gregory.

him as something of a rogue.⁴¹ In his biography of Phillips, Thomas Seccombe remarks that later in his life ‘in spite of his peculiarities and irascible temper, Phillips’s business prospered.’⁴² Issitt elaborates on Phillips’s dubious reputation by asserting that not only did he claim to have ‘disproved Newton’s Theory of Gravitation’, but that his name may have been Phillip Richards rather than the other way around, and that he was imprisoned early on for selling Paine’s *The Rights of Man*.⁴³ However, Issitt is also quick to point out that despite the relative overabundance of negative criticism directed at Phillips, ‘he clearly contributed to the spread of literacy’, something which he shared with Barbauld and, perhaps more indirectly, with Richardson as moral didactic novelist.⁴⁴ Moreover, Phillips was born into circumstances not dissimilar to Richardson’s, and their evident flair for business also establishes a shared entrepreneurial connection.⁴⁵

By 1796, following a fire which had destroyed many of his ventures, Phillips had moved to London and had set up the *Monthly Magazine*, engaging John Aikin as editor.⁴⁶ It was at this point that he met Barbauld and shortly after he engaged her to edit his collection of Richardson’s manuscripts. However, as time went on the relationship between Aikin and Phillips became untenable, which led to Aikin’s eventual departure. Despite Phillips’s adverse disposition his businesses in London were flourishing, and in 1807 he set up the *Antiquities Magazine*. The methods of marketing, described earlier by Issitt, were entirely underway by this point and undoubtedly contributed to Phillips’s success. He had obviously identified that the saleability of books depended largely on its connection to an eminent name. Seccombe tells us that ‘His publications included vast numbers of elementary school books and cheap manuals, issued under a variety of

⁴¹ William Axon wrote on Phillips in 1888, as did A. Boyle in *Notes and Queries* (1951), but I have been able to find little else other than occasional references in works on publishing.

⁴² Seccombe, *ODNB*.

⁴³ Issitt, ‘Introducing Sir Richard Phillips’. Both Seccombe and McCarthy (p. 370) confirm that Phillips had been imprisoned for eighteen months in January 1793.

⁴⁴ Issitt, ‘Introducing Sir Richard Phillips’.

⁴⁵ Richardson’s early years will be discussed in chapter 1. Phillips’s family were farmers in Leicestershire, and Seccombe tells us that he found ‘his home surroundings distasteful’. Between 1789 and his introduction to the Aikin’s in 1796, Phillips had changed location numerous times, setting up various business along the way, including being a stationer, a bookseller, a patent medicine vendor and operating a circulating library. Phillips had founded a radical newspaper, the *Leicester Herald* (1792), which he continued to edit whilst in prison, and three years later he added the scientific magazine the *Museum* (1795) to his increasing list of credits.

⁴⁶ According to Seccombe, Phillips had received payment from an insurance policy after the fire, presumably enabling him to set up his business in London.

pseudonyms. French, Italian, and Latin dictionaries and phrasebooks [...] appeared'.⁴⁷ On occasion Phillips appeared as the author of some of the books, and at other times different names were used. By the summer of 1807 Phillips had been elected as sheriff of London, and within a year he had been knighted by George III. Financial embarrassment followed this period of great success and, with the exception of the *Monthly Magazine* and a few other copyrights, Phillips lost everything. By 1832 he had retired to Brighton, where he lived with his wife and children until his death on 2 April 1840.⁴⁸ As Issitt has attested, Phillips managed to incur much criticism, and even though Seccombe includes more of this in his brief biography, he also counterbalances it with proportionate praise.

From the scant biographies of Phillips it is possible to piece together the type of character that Barbauld had to contend with. He was a man arrogant enough to write his own epitaph, a man whose petulant temper was legendary, and he was a man whose egotistical nature had questioned the reliability of Newton's revolutionary theory of relativity. Phillips was notoriously difficult to work for, and Barbauld's experiences of him were no different. Her time spent working on Richardson's manuscripts 'turned out to be a curse. Prone to suspicion and hysterical self-vindication, he [Phillips] was a domineering taskmaster who treated [...] authors [...] as nothing more than hired hands.'⁴⁹

As soon as Phillips had purchased Richardson's correspondence – a few days before the 25 February 1804 – he released a notice to the public, dated 1 February 1804, informing them 'that the letters would "speedily" be published'.⁵⁰ Within a

⁴⁷ Seccombe, *ODNB*.

⁴⁸ Phillips married Elizabeth Griffiths, a milliner's assistant, in 1795. They had three sons and four daughters (Seccombe, p. 2).

⁴⁹ McCarthy, p. 415.

⁵⁰ McCarthy, p. 412 and pp. 648-649. McCarthy uses a letter from Lucy Aikin (Barbauld's niece) to an undisclosed friend to substantiate the vague time of Phillips's purchase. However, he states that Aikin writes the letter on the 25 February 1804 'a few days after' Phillips completes his purchase. The remaining timeline that McCarthy offers suggests that Phillips advertised the swift publication of the letters almost a month before, on the 1 February 1804, Lucy Aikin's letter to her friend. The timeline given by McCarthy runs thus: 1 February 1804 Phillips releases notice stating that Richardson's 'letters would be "speedily" published'; 25 February 1804 Lucy Aikin informs her friend 'a few days after' Phillips completed his purchase that he has delivered the letters to her aunt; 1 March Phillips releases another notice, this time informing the public that Anna Barbauld was to edit the letters; four and a half months later Barbauld is ready to publish (for further information on this see later sub-section: 'The Media Machine').

month, on 1 March 1804, he announced that Anna Barbauld ‘would “superintend” their publication.’⁵¹

The Media Machine

Barbauld was expected to work quickly, and within four and a half months of her receiving the manuscripts, another advertisement was issued.⁵² On 19 July 1804 *The Times* issued a notice informing its readers that a new magazine, the *Literary Journal*, would be published ‘on the 31st of July’ at a cost of ‘2s. 6d’ and it would continue on a monthly basis.⁵³ The advertised July edition was to contain numerous reviews including one of ‘Richardson’s Correspondence’.⁵⁴ The advertisement submitted in *The Times* for the *Literary Journal* clearly markets it as an advanced and superior publication suitable for the intellectual reader; its language is designed to seduce the potential subscriber:

It is a principal object of this Review to unite original disquisition with the analysis of the works. The great advantages of this plan must be obvious to every intelligent reader: the rule and example are thus at once set before him; and not only is he presented with an account of the publication reviewed, and a judgement on its merits, but the principles on which this judgement is formed are at the same time unfolded. A review written on this plan is extremely different from those which give the bare analysis of books: It may be read with advantage and pleasure for its original observations, whatever be the fate of the works which it reviews. As such a publication is peculiarly calculated to guide the public opinion, the utmost attention is paid to the earliness of the reviews, so that they in general precede those of every competitor.⁵⁵

The submission of an advertisement in *The Times* and then in the new, and evidently high-brow, the *Literary Journal*, points to Phillips having a clear idea of

⁵¹ McCarthy, p. 649. There is no information available as to the terms of Barbauld’s employment with Phillips, but McCarthy estimates that, due to information about other work done for Phillips, Barbauld may have earned as much as £250-£300 for her contribution (McCarthy, p. 649, *n.10*).

⁵² McCarthy notes that Phillips was harassing Barbauld for her work within two months of his delivering the manuscripts to her (McCarthy, p. 415). He also attests that Phillips was ‘accusing her of neglecting his interests’ (McCarthy, p. 415).

⁵³ *The Times*, 19 July 1804. The *Literary Journal*: or, *Universal Review of Literature, Domestic and Foreign* was also known as the *Imperial Review*.

⁵⁴ *The Times*, 19 July 1804.

⁵⁵ *The Times*, 19 July 1804.

his intended audience: the early nineteenth century intelligentsia, the cultured literati of the period, and a group that Richardson himself had aspired to become part of over half a century earlier.

The newly published edition of Richardson's *Correspondence* was marketed far and wide by Phillips, with advertisements appearing in numerous periodicals.⁵⁶ Richardson's *Correspondence* was also discussed as far away as the United States of America. In the October 1804 issue of Philadelphia's *Literary Magazine and American Register* there is a short announcement in the "Notices of Recent Publications" under the heading of "European Literary Intelligence" stating that 'the celebrated Mrs. Barbauld' has compiled an edition of Richardson's manuscripts.⁵⁷ The notice is complimentary to Richardson, claiming that he has 'sublimed and disembodied intelligence', but the star of the piece is undoubtedly Barbauld.⁵⁸

As stated in *The Times* advert, Richardson's *Correspondence* was indeed reviewed in the 31 July edition of the *Literary Journal*, along with an assurance of further intriguing Richardson memorabilia. The seventeen page review of Barbauld's edition ends with the promise of an unpublished letter by Richardson to his nephew, and states that it 'has been in the personal possession of a Friend upwards of thirty years, [and] will hold up the character of Richardson in a point of view, in which he has not been exhibited in the volumes that have now passed under our notice.'⁵⁹ The review begins with a compliment to Barbauld, by saying that the collection 'is justly and elegantly observed by the fair editor', and goes on

⁵⁶ *Monthly Review; Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal; Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature; Monthly Visitor, and New Family Magazine; Lady's Monthly Museum, or Polite Repository of Amusement and Instruction; Monthly Epitome; or, Readers their own reviews; British Critic; New Annual Register, or, General Repository of History, Politics, Arts, Sciences, and Literature; European Magazine, and London Review*, among others.

⁵⁷ *Literary Magazine and American Register*, volume II, No. 13, 1804, pp. 532-533, p. 532. McCarthy states that this piece was written by the American novelist Charles Brockden Brown (McCarthy, p. 419).

⁵⁸ *Literary Magazine and American Register*, p. 532. There are a number of other references to Richardson, Barbauld, John Aikin and a few of his correspondents in this magazine. In the July 1804 edition there is an article entitled "Vanity of Richardson". A section from Barbauld's "Life of Richardson" is transcribed in a piece by her entitled "On Novel Writing" which appears in the December 1804 issue. In the same issue there is a piece called "Fielding and Richardson" which has elements of her discussion on the writers, but is by no means an exact transcription of her work on them. In the August 1804 issue there is a press notice advertising John Aikin's *Poetical Works of James Thomson, with an essay on the Seasons*, and Mrs. Chapone, Mrs. Delany and Mr. Klopstock have articles either about them or by them (see *Literary Magazine and American Register*).

⁵⁹ *Imperial Review: or, London, Edinburgh and Dublin literary journal*, 2, (July, 1804) pp. 414-430 (p. 430).

to offer an example of that professed elegance by including a quote from her edition.⁶⁰ The reviewer identifies that Barbauld highlights the interest that the public has in the domestic life of the famous:

Experience of the truth of these remarks gives additional activity to that curiosity whereby the public at large are naturally prompted to inquire into the domestic habits and familiar connections of those writers, whose lucubrations have afforded them instruction and pleasure.⁶¹

This is an important point for Barbauld, and is an area that she dedicates time to when introducing her reader to her biography of Richardson. Barbauld is acutely aware that she has to convince her reader of the acceptability of looking into the personal life of the rich and famous, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, her approach is mostly successful. Barbauld's method is to rely largely upon Richardson's own words, which not only enables the dead author to control his own legacy from the grave, but presents the biographer with the opportunity, should she choose to, to refrain from a temptation toward being intrusive.

The reviewer of this article likes Barbauld, and shares in her liking of her subject. He refers to Richardson as being of 'a distinguished rank', where 'his reputation still stands high in the scale of merit.'⁶² The reviewer admits that 'we still love to weep over the woes of Clarissa', before offering the highest of accolades that a reviewer could offer, declaring that: 'The publication of his private correspondence, therefore, cannot fail to excite general interest.'⁶³ The reviewer draws attention to the importance of authenticity when handling documents such as these, and is satisfied that Barbauld has covered all aspects of this, along with any organisational queries, in her advertisement. What is striking about the tone of this review is that it succeeds as an advert as much as it does a review which, arguably, is its function. The reviewer offers a précis of Barbauld's own advertisement, quoting heavily from it, and the reader has little choice but to be drawn in. The reviewer congratulates Phillips – and further praises Barbauld by referring to her as a woman of 'taste and discretion' – on his choice of purchase:

⁶⁰ *Imperial Review*, p. 414.

⁶¹ *Imperial Review*, pp. 414-415.

⁶² *Imperial Review*, p. 415.

⁶³ *Imperial Review*, p. 415.

If, in this instance, Mr Phillips has evinced his discernment in the choice of an object of purchase, he has not, in our opinion, exhibited less judgement in submitting these valuable documents to the critical inspection of Mrs Barbauld.⁶⁴

The review continues by giving a brief account of Barbauld's biography of Richardson, again quoting heavily from it, and is only ever praiseworthy of both Barbauld and her subject.

By and large Barbauld's work was a success, and 'laid the foundation for future commentary on Richardson.'⁶⁵ Once Barbauld had laid down her pen, it was Phillips's responsibility to prepare her edition for publication, and he did so with fervour:

The six volumes were lavishly produced, with facsimiles of some of the manuscripts, a bit of technological swank intended by Phillips to enhance their prestige; he priced them at two guineas. The edition revived Richardson's name at a time when his reputation had been fading.⁶⁶

Barbauld had fulfilled her role as the Editor of Richardson's *Correspondence*, she had done her job. Phillips's acquisition had been crafted into a saleable commodity in its own right, and had also been used as an effective apparatus designed to rejuvenate the posthumous career of an outmoded novelist. It had become the money making tool that Richard Phillips had wanted it to be, as well as a career boosting vehicle for 'the nation's foremost woman of letters': Anna Laetitia Barbauld.⁶⁷

Methodology

In chapter one I aim to use Anna Laetitia Barbauld's "Life of Richardson" – found in volume I of her edition – to show how she uses the genre of biography to construct her idea of Richardson as an important and popular figure in the emergence of the novel as a valuable genre in its own right. The impetus for Barbauld's construction is her employment as Editor of the project, a project which needs to succeed in order for Phillips to reap his rewards. Her biography

⁶⁴ *Imperial Review*, p. 415.

⁶⁵ McCarthy, p. 419.

⁶⁶ McCarthy, p. 419.

⁶⁷ McCarthy, p. 419.

lays the foundation on which to build a five volume collection of her selection of Richardson's correspondences. Again, her choices are largely aimed at sympathetically publicising her subject, and flaunting him as a famous, celebrity author.

In chapter two, having discussed Barbauld's construction of Richardson as a celebrity, I aim to use sections of her edition to discuss the idea of Richardson's Correspondence as a fan club. The *OED* tells us that a fan can be described as 'a keen follower', and Richardson had many admirers who eagerly waited for his latest prose offerings, following his characters so closely that they became passionately involved enough to write to him with demands and alternative endings to his novels.⁶⁸ By taking a selection of his correspondents, and by considering Richardson's role in the updating and selecting process of the letters, it is possible to enter into a dialogue about the difference between friendly letter exchange, and the premeditated accumulation and encouragement of letter trading.

Due to the restrictions of word count it is impossible to comprehensively discuss each fan and each of their letters. Therefore I have elected to focus specifically on two fans from Barbauld's edition. In chapter three I close-read the letters that passed between Richardson and Sarah Wescomb, and in chapter four the epistolary relationship between Richardson and 'Belfour' is discussed. From the outset of their relationships with him, both women remained life-long communicators with, and fans of, the novelist.

The starting point for this thesis was always the Richardson manuscripts, housed in the Forster Collection of the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. They are a vast, and arguably, deliberate assemblage of letters carefully selected, and often edited, by Richardson himself. The Victorian presentation comprises six large, bottle green and gold-edged, leather-bound volumes, measuring 44x30.5x4cm.⁶⁹ Its condition is confused and unkempt

⁶⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary*, prepared by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, 2nd edition, vol. V (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 711.

⁶⁹ McKillop provides us with information about the journey of the Richardson manuscripts once they had left Phillips's family: 'From Southgate's Catalogue of January 21-22, 1828, offering Phillips's collections for sale [...] The six volumes we now have were bought at that sale by William Upcott, the famous autograph collector, and passed from him to John Forster'. (McKillop, p. 285.

but is now, volume by volume, being restored by the museum.⁷⁰ On opening any of the volumes, the reader is greeted by a plethora of epistles, and the experience is not unlike the first opening of a Richardson novel: a cacophony of voices demanding to be heard. To suggest that these letters provide us with much of his life story and therefore are, arguably, his longest epistolary novel is perhaps taking the argument a step too far, but William McCarthy alludes to such a possibility in his recent biography of Anna Barbauld: ‘The result [of Barbauld’s editorial decisions] would nudge the letters toward fiction, producing similar effects to those of Richardson’s novels.’⁷¹

After extensively viewing the manuscript letters, I inevitably turned my attention to the 1804 edition of them by Anna Barbauld, and it is this work that now takes centre stage in this thesis. Making my job as a scholar easier, Barbauld had transcribed a large amount of the manuscripts letters so to pursue this avenue further seemed futile. Instead, her treatment of them, and the choices she made for them, presented an intriguing additional argument to the one I had already engaged in. Barbauld had constructed her own image of Richardson as an early modern celebrity which could only ever enhance my case for viewing these manuscripts in some senses as fan mail.

By taking Richardson as an example of an early modern celebrity who, for all intents and purposes, cultivated and then managed his own fan club, the aim here is to show how the friends, the circle or the coterie can also be described as the fan.⁷²

⁷⁰ Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor are currently compiling a new and extensive twenty-five volume edition, for Cambridge University Press, of Richardson’s works and correspondence.

⁷¹ McCarthy, p. 414.

⁷² Past scholars of Richardson have used these terms to describe the group that Richardson surrounded him with, what I am choosing to call his fans. John Carroll uses a plethora of descriptions for them: ‘devotees in petticoats’; ‘circle’; ‘admirers’; ‘coterie’; and ‘his pride of correspondents’ (Carroll, p. 14, p. 16, p. 19, p. 21, and p. 29). Eaves and Kimpel refer to them consistently as ‘correspondents’ throughout their work. Austin Dobson refers to his female correspondents as ‘his School of Emotion’ (Austin Dobson, *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, 2nd edition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1894), p. 70). Barbauld largely refers to them simply as ‘correspondents’ and, more specifically, his female followers as a ‘flower-garden of ladies’ (*The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison. Selected from the Original Manuscripts, Bequeathed by him to his Family, To which are prefixed, A Biographical Account of that Author, and Observations on his Writings*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), I, p. clxi)).

CHAPTER ONE

An Editor's Apparatus: Anna Laetitia Barbauld's 'Life of Richardson'

No species of writing seems more worthy of cultivation than biography, since none can be more delightful or more useful, none can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition.¹

The primary purpose of the collaboration of Richard Phillips and Anna Barbauld in early 1804 was to construct a saleable edition of Samuel Richardson's *Correspondence*. In order to guarantee the success of the venture – given Richardson's uncertain reputation – Anna Barbauld, as editor, was employed to present a selection of her favourite letters complete with a biography of the novelist. This biography served as a persuasive means to convince her nineteenth century audience of Richardson's contemporary worth and, in turn, his status.

Whether or not Barbauld intended to construct her own celebrity idea of Richardson is not known; it simply appears of its own volition. From the telling of his life story, via a critique of his work, to the carefully constructed insight into his personal correspondence, Barbauld's creation is fascinating, albeit safe. It is evident that Barbauld has three principal components to her edition; the traditional structure for any story: a beginning, middle and end. In the first instance she offers a foundation in the shape of her 'Advertisement', quickly followed by the second which is a biography, 'Life of Richardson, with Remarks on His Writings', this provides the perfect platform on which to set up her representation of him.² Finally, she presents her selection of letters which serve to amplify and consolidate her idea of the author.

¹ Samuel Johnson, 'On Biography', *The Rambler* No.60, 6th edn, 4 vols, II (London: printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; J. Rivington; J. Newbery; R. Baldwin; S. Crowder and Co. T. Caslon; B. Law and Co. and B. Collins, 1763), pp. 31-36 (p. 32).

² Barbauld's 'Life of Richardson' is her first excursion into the realms of biography and proves to be her longest piece of prose writing; it is also the first known biography of Richardson.

Barbauld the Literary Critic

Barbauld's narrative, and construction, of Richardson begins with a four page advertisement in which she immediately addresses the procurement of the correspondence by Richard Phillips. The enlightened eighteenth century public had developed an interest in the lives of the rich and famous. In his essay 'The Proper Study?' Richard Holmes, when discussing the early eighteenth century biographies of Defoe and Johnson – both of which make it onto his canonical wish-list – directs his reader toward subject preference: 'the first short eighteenth-century masterpieces of English biography were about marginal and disreputable figures, not kings or kaisers.'³ Holmes goes on to say that 'By the early nineteenth century, the cultural significance of biography's growing popularity was broadly recognized' and that 'Coleridge wrote about it in his journal *The Friend* (1810), calling it the product of 'emphatically an Age of Personality''.⁴ William McCarthy further draws our attention to Phillips's understanding of this: 'Phillips was taking advantage of a sudden market in multivolume lives and letters', and that he was hoping to copy the success of 'His neighbour in St. Paul's Churchyard, Joseph Johnson, [who] had done well the year before with a life and letters of the poet William Cowper'.⁵

Barbauld goes to great lengths to make both her position and involvement, and that of the new owner of the manuscripts Richard Phillips, clear by offering a potted history of their journey as well as an overview of the intentions of her employer:

When a private correspondence is presented to the public, the first question which occurs is, how have they been procured? – In the present instance this admits of the most satisfactory answer. It was the custom of Mr. RICHARDSON, not only to preserve the letters of his numerous correspondents, but to take copies of his own, generally by the hands of his daughters, - particularly his daughter Martha, and his nephew, who performed to him the office of amanuensis. It was the favourite

³ Richard Holmes, 'The Proper Study?', in *Mapping Lives: The Uses of Biography*, ed. by Peter France and William St Clair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 7-18 (p. 11). Defoe's *The History of John Sheppard* (1724) and *A Narrative of John Sheppard* (1724), and Johnson's *The Life of Mr Richard Savage* (1744).

⁴ Holmes, p. 11.

⁵ William McCarthy, *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Voice of the Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 412-413.

employment of his declining years to select and arrange them, and he always looked forward to their publication at some distant period, when the lapse of time should have precluded the necessity of observing that delicacy which living characters have always a claim to. Indeed, he was not without thoughts of publishing them in his life time, in which case he would have subjected them to such restrictions as his correspondents thought proper to impose. After his death they remained in the hands of Mrs. Anne Richardson, his last-surviving daughter, till her death, which took place in January last. After that event they became the property of his grandchildren, of who Mr. Phillips purchased them at a very liberal price: he trusts of the remuneration to the curiosity of the public, which has always shewn an eagerness, more natural perhaps than strictly justifiable, to penetrate into the domestic retirements, and to be introduced to the companionable hours of eminent characters.⁶

The tone of Barbauld's advertisement shows awareness of privacy, and of the consequences of invading that privacy.⁷ She embraces the understanding that the public are already curious in these matters, but is keen to show that she has a conscience about such things being legitimate and proper. There is a sense that Barbauld needs to justify - both to herself and to the public - her involvement in this exercise and is explicit in doing so by divulging to her reader that Richardson had always intended his letters for publication. Barbauld needs the public to understand her involvement, and she consolidates her role by drawing our attention to his habitual pre-occupation with the safe-keeping and organisation of the letters, as well as by the employment of his family. Richardson's epistle factory was a dedicated and relatively large venture, and by making the public aware that her subject was intent upon offering his letters for public exploitation at some point, allows Barbauld the freedom to begin exploring. She exhibits an

⁶ *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison. Selected from the Original Manuscripts, Bequeathed by him to his Family, To which are prefixed, A Biographical Account of that Author, and Observations on his Writings*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), I, pp. iii-v.

⁷ Although there appears to be little legal reference to any specific laws on privacy, William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1765-1769) offer detailed statements on the subjects of libel and slander, including what constitutes either one and their respective rulings. Blackstone states that 'The right of personal security consists in a person's legal and uninterrupted enjoyment of his life [...], and his reputation' (Blackstone, I, 125). Blackstone goes on to say that both slander and libel are civil injuries (Blackstone, III, 118 and 125-127), and that slander is punishable by imprisonment but the length of term is dependant upon the status of the victim (Blackstone, III, 124-125). Libel is punishable by indictment, prosecution and damages to be paid, but the plaintiff has to be proven to have been affected by the alleged libel particularly in terms of 'signs or pictures' (Blackstone, III, 125-126).

understanding of public psychology – which was showing a growing interest in the writer and his public life – from both the recently departed eighteenth century, as well as the new century that she finds herself living in, by immediately tackling these large issues of procurement, privacy and legitimacy. This awareness provides her with the possibility of lessening any criticism of her work by pre-empting the issue before it can arise. Understandably, Barbauld wants the public's sympathy and, in a genteel but seductive way, she sets about attaining it with a tone devoid of condescension or disrespect. When talking directly to her reader about others she is courteous but authoritative, and invariably, trusting, qualities she exhibits when introducing her boss Richard Phillips who, she is eager to point out, 'purchased [the manuscripts] at a very liberal price'.⁸ At this point Barbauld informs us that both she and Phillips are merely providing a service 'to the curiosity of the public', though she is quick to implicate him as leader.⁹ Barbauld justifies her position further by addressing the idea that curiosity is simply part of the human condition, a theme that is ever-present in her work, so being interested in and reading about 'eminent characters' is just satisfying a human urge that is innate in all.¹⁰ Barbauld is reassuring the public that prying into the lives of others is inherent in the human, and that by incorporating it into a structured work such as hers, she is aiding those who either desire to discover more or simply choose to learn. Barbauld mirrors Richardson in his moral standing on indiscretion, and the boundaries which Richardson adhered to are completely respected by her:

That this inclination may be gratified without impropriety, care has been taken that no letters should be published of any living character, except the correspondence of Mrs. Duncombe, (formerly Miss Highmore) which that lady has had the goodness to communicate herself. She also supplied the correspondence of Miss Mulso. Mr. Scudamore also obligingly

⁸ Barbauld, I, p. v.

⁹ Barbauld, I, p. v.

¹⁰ Barbauld, I, p. v. Barbauld understands the human desire to look into the lives of others in much the same way as William Godwin did when presenting to the public the memoir of his late wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, in 1798. In Godwin's *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman* he states that 'It has always appeared to me, that to give the public some account of the life of a person of eminent merit deceased, it is a duty incumbent on survivors', Godwin goes on to say that: 'Every benefactor of mankind is more or less influenced by a liberal passion for fame; and survivors only pay a debt due to these benefactors'. (William Godwin, *A Short Residence in Sweden, AND Memoirs of the Author of 'The Rights of Woman'*, ed by Richard Holmes (London: Penguin Classics, 1987), p. 204).

sent several letters of his deceased mother's. The whole collection is very numerous.¹¹

Barbauld concludes the first section of her work by highlighting Phillips's initial involvement: 'When Mr. Phillips had completed his purchase, he engaged me to perform the necessary office of selection.'¹² Her job as editor is evidently at the forefront of her mind, and Barbauld makes it clear to her audience that while the choices are solely her own, she is wholly aware that any reader engaged to do her job could have chosen differently. Barbauld's clever conclusion sees her at her polite best, hoping to have done 'justice to him [Richardson] and to the public', but as she is writing before her work has been published she is unaware of 'how I have succeeded'.¹³ As the advertisement draws to a close Barbauld again directs her attention toward the critic by reiterating that the selection of letters is her personal choice, and as a consequence it would be unfair to criticise it too harshly. Barbauld is concerned about criticism, and goes out of her way to address it. By pre-empting the situation she makes it difficult for a critic to attack her too harshly, and may even eradicate the possibility of it entirely. In his 1968 essay 'Serious Reflections on "*The Rise of the Novel*"' Ian Watt makes a defiant attempt at defending his 1957 seminal work *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* by writing a piece designed to explore the difficulties faced by an author who releases a book into the public domain.¹⁴ In this essay Watt discusses the role of the critic, which offers an insight into the anxieties that Barbauld may well have been facing:

Reviewing belongs to a large class of benevolent-aggressive dyadic relationships which are characterized, like dentistry, by an extreme asymmetry of roles. The transitive agent, the reviewer, is secure in the knowledge that his sitting duck can neither fly off nor hit back; despite this great freedom, however, reviewers seem to operate under a highly conventional set of institutionalized imperatives, all naturally directed towards producing the most pain with the least effort.

This expertise is highly valued whether it serves merely to maximise the personal pleasure of the reviewer, or, as more commonly, more to equip him for the effective discharge of his

¹¹ Barbauld, I, pp. v-vi.

¹² Barbauld, I, p. vi.

¹³ Barbauld, I, p. vi.

¹⁴ Watt's original work is discussed later in this chapter.

primary professional obligation – to teach the universe some of the discipline it so sadly lacks.¹⁵

Watt's acerbic retaliation aims to draw a line under the attacks he faced after the publication of *The Rise of the Novel*, but it also acts as a humorous and comforting reassurance to any writer whose work had entered the public domain, the anxieties of which were clearly present in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

As editor and biographer, Barbauld's job is to cement the mark that Richardson had already made for future generations. Richardson's popularity had begun to waver by the late eighteenth century, and now that Phillips had purchased his latest investment he had to find a way of selling it on. He had to make Richardson popular once again and who better to do this than the darling of the moment: the virtuous and ever popular Anna Barbauld, a celebrity in her own right. From the moment she begins her work on Richardson, Barbauld fits into the role that she had constructed for herself throughout her own career; the role of the polite, inoffensive, and good Mrs. Barbauld.¹⁶

From the outset of Barbauld's 'Life of Richardson' there is no doubt about her opinion of her subject. She is fair but never really articulates anything risky, except close to the end of the biography when she is discussing his well-documented vanity. Anna Barbauld never gossips about Richardson, she just reports facts as she sees them, but is seductive in her manner. This ability to seduce her reader is what contributes to Barbauld's status as an early Romantic celebrity.

Barbauld is aware that her edition might, for some readers, be an introduction to Richardson, which necessitates an abundance of glowing references. Before passing through his novels, by providing a short synopsis and an elaborate critique

¹⁵ Ian Watt, 'Serious Reflections on "The Rise of the Novel"', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 1.3 (1968) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345161>> [accessed 12 October 2008] (p.205-218).

¹⁶ This is the path Anna Barbauld chose to go down, and she is still following it in 1803-4, after this point she begins to make some changes and by 1812 and the publication of her political poem *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* she, perhaps unknowingly, uncovers a rather different side of her character to the awaiting public. The public reception of *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* is fierce and for the first time Barbauld is exposed to the other side of fame: harsh, fickle and uncompromising. From this point on in her career, hurt and damaged by the turncoat critics, Barbauld becomes a relative recluse, and whilst she wrote for the occasional magazine, and remained a trustworthy correspondent to her close friends, she never again publishes a collection of poems before her death in March 1825.

of each one, she leads up to the crux of her argument: Richardson's pioneering genre of literature:

He may, in a great measure, be said to be the father of the modern novel of the serious or pathetic kind, and he was also original in the mode of epistolary writing by which he carried on the story.¹⁷

Barbauld's main concern in her biography of Richardson is positioning, literary positioning in particular, and by approaching this argument of status from different angles she is able to successfully explore her hypothesis. She unreservedly begins by endowing Richardson with paternal rights over much of the genre. Rank and title, as we shall see, are vital to Richardson and Barbauld sets out to honour this by offering a sympathetic tale of Richardson's life, followed by a selection of letters which substantiate her claims. Barbauld begins her narrative by placing Richardson and his works high amongst the ranks of his literary counterparts, and then sets about cementing him in his place.¹⁸ She establishes him at the front of, and superior to, a history of writers such as Behn, Sidney, Defoe, Fielding, Pope and Swift whom, she intimates did not pioneer an entire genre of literature unlike Richardson. But just as Richardson himself struggled with status, so did his chosen genre. Barbauld makes an attempt at re-writing literary history by setting Richardson apart from those who came before him, as well as those who were his direct contemporaries. By setting Richardson aside from the others she aims to cement his position within literary history, and even though the others may or may not get lost amongst it, her aim here is to make sure that Richardson survives and thrives in posterity. In a treatise, found in *Variety: A Collection of Essays. Written in the Year 1787*, its anonymous writer clearly states, when discussing Richardson's *Clarissa*, that:

It is no where that Morality is more powerfully enforced; it is no where that Piety is more exquisitely lovely. Every individual in that large *Dramatis Personae*, is drawn with such

¹⁷ Barbauld, I, p. xi.

¹⁸ In her later work, *The British Novelists* (1810), Barbauld begins with Richardson showing her continued commitment to his status as pioneering novelist. In its introduction, Barbauld condemns 'eighteenth-century apologists of the novel' by insisting that 'To read the productions of with and genius is a very high pleasure to all persons of taste' (William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750*, pp. 16-17).

distinctness, such characteristic strength, that not a letter, a single speech in the whole work, but so peculiarly belongs to the nature of that spirit, which is supposed to have dictated it; that it is needless to cast the eye back to the name of the speaker, or to look at the signature.¹⁹

For this writer, none of what Richardson has offered has come before. The piece clearly states that there can be no confusion over who wrote such a work as only one person could have: Richardson. Barbauld simply builds upon this thesis. The next article in *Variety* goes on to claim that the playwright Robert Jephson ‘has availed himself, in his poetic and spirited tragedy *Julia*, of the pen-knife scene in *Clarissa*’, the implication being that Richardson not only pioneered, but inspired.²⁰ While it is helpful, for the purpose of this thesis, to allow Barbauld the room to attempt a re-write of literary history, more modern literary critics would be sceptical of the need or desire to do it at all. But Barbauld understands that literary history has the power to frame events, and her aim was to centralise her subject within that framing process, thus proving Richardson’s dominance within the realms of literary history as she then knew it. Barbauld includes poets, satirists and novelists in her line-up of greats, and by championing Richardson she is essentially highlighting the genre of the novel as an important and credible form of literature. This is a thesis built upon by Ian Watt in his seminal work *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*. Watt’s defining argument discusses a decline in the importance of classical authority, and he asserts the claim that this deterioration left room for the emergence of a new realistic design pioneered in the early eighteenth century by Defoe, Richardson and Fielding.

In *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750*, William Warner makes an attempt at ‘breaking the spell of “the rise of the novel”’ by asking ‘where and when and why does the story [of the British novel] begin to be told?’, and he warns modern readers to be ‘skeptical of the efforts of those novelists and literary critics who hasten to designate the first real novel’, but

¹⁹ The anonymous credit to the writer of the article had formerly been attributed to the poet Anna Seward. Humphry Repton, ed, *Variety: A Collection of Essays. Written in the Year 1787*, No. 25 (London: printed for T. Cadell, 1788), p. 217.

²⁰ Repton, No. 25, p. 225. According to the *ODNB*, Robert Jephson was Anna Seward’s favourite dramatist (Paul Baines, ‘Jephson, Robert (1736/7-1803)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>>[accessed 1 Feb 2010])

Warner is happy to recognise the place of the novel as a literary type.²¹ Warner's hesitancy comes as a result of his belief that:

Any literary history focused around designating the first real novel – with its restless intention to promote and demote, and to designate winners and losers – cannot stand outside, but instead inhabits the terms of that culturally improving enlightenment narrative that tradition has dubbed “the rise of the novel.” Before the emergence of the novel into literary studies and literary pedagogy, novels played a subsidiary role in several crucial episodes: the debate, over the course of the eighteenth century, about the pleasures and moral dangers of novel reading; the adjudication of the novel's role in articulating distinct national cultures; and finally, the various efforts to claim that a certain representation of modern life is realistic. It is through these three articulations that the novel secures its place as a type of literature.

Warner highlights exactly what Barbauld is trying to do by separating Richardson out from the other writers she mentions; she supports him and devalues the others, she champions Richardson as the Great and the others she relegates to the realms of mediocre. For Barbauld, Richardson enabled the novel to live within the ranks of good literature, and Warner, to a degree, agrees with the novel being allowed its own status. Richardson's works were credible forms of the novel, devoid of the ‘sexual scandal which clings to the early novel[s]’ and “‘secret histories” written by Behn, Manley, and Haywood.’²²

Early on in the biography Barbauld picks out nouns with which to surround Richardson, providing him with a cushion of words such as ‘heroism’ and ‘celebrity’, so that from the beginning her reader is secure in the knowledge that Samuel Richardson was a leading light in the literary society of eighteenth century England.²³

²¹ William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 2-3. Ian Watt's pioneering book *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957) begins the literary history of the novel in the early eighteenth century. Watt opened up the debate for the novel's literary history which has been reviewed and updated by numerous scholars (for example, McKeon, Davis, Armstrong, Hunter, Gallagher and Warner) ever since.

²² Warner, p. 4.

²³ Barbauld, I, pp. xi-xiii. Barbauld makes the point that even though his works were ‘pure and virtuous’ he was still hounded and asked ‘either to burn his book, or resign his bishopric; upon which, with the heroism of an author, he chose the latter’ (Barbauld, I, p. xi).

Barbauld's opening page deserves close inspection as she cleverly sets up her argument by informing her reader of the precise direction that she intends to take them in:

There, is no period in the history of any country, at all advanced in elegant literature, in which *fictitious adventures* have not made a large part of the reading men have most delighted in. They have been grafted upon the actions of their heroes, they have been interwoven with their mythology, they have been moulded upon the manners of the age, and, in return, have influenced not a little the manners of the next generation, by the principles they have insinuated, and the sensibilities they have exercised.²⁴

Barbauld proceeds to discuss literature and its historical significance before launching into the main focus of her argument: fiction. Her aim here is to make certain that everyone reading this biography of Richardson fully understands its relevance and worth; her intention is to give fiction gravitas. Barbauld builds a convincing case for the novel, and to all intents and purposes works in much the same way as Philip Sidney had done over 200 years earlier in his treatise *A Defence of Poetry* (pub. 1595), by fundamentally offering a hardened 'defence of fiction'.²⁵ In fact, early on in her vindication of Richardson, Barbauld affords Sidney a short paragraph positioning him historically and concluding by describing his *Arcadia* as 'the once famous romance [Sidney's *Arcadia*], of the pastoral heroic kind, if the expression may be permitted. It is a book that all have heard of, that some possess, but that nobody reads.'²⁶ However Barbauld, unlike Sidney, does not write in verse but the premise of defending a genre so openly criticised follows the same path as Sidney's earlier work, and by dignifying the genre she is at the same time dignifying the author.²⁷ As we shall see later, dignity is important to Richardson and Barbauld is fully aware of this. We can

²⁴ Barbauld, I, p. vii.

²⁵ Sir Philip Sidney's (1554-1586) works also include the pastoral romance *Arcadia* (1590) and the sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), neither of which was published in his lifetime. He was knighted, arguably for reasons of protocol, in 1583. For Sidney, as with Barbauld and arguably to some extent Richardson, poetry was meant to be didactic. Richardson goes on to publish an edition of Sidney's works in 1724 and 1725.

²⁶ Barbauld, I, p. xviii.

²⁷ Barbauld, though probably inadvertently, is giving herself a slap on the back here. She is recognising that just as Philip Sidney had written a defence of poetry, she is now rendering it necessary, some 200 years on, to offer a defence of fiction, and is basking publicly in the glory of doing so. No-one else has had the courage or wherewithal to do it.

again venture back to Sidney's era, where subtext disguised behind ornate language, was often used as a method of communication, and from this we are able to fully appreciate Barbauld's reasoning behind the uses and importance of fiction. Her overt understanding of what came before is obvious from the start when she sets up the significance of fiction, and indeed poetry, by discussing how it has been used:

A spirit of adventure, a high sense of honour, of martial glory, refined and romantic passion, sentimental delicacy, or all the melting sensibilities of humanity, have been, in their turns, inspired by this powerful engine, which takes so strong a hold on the fancy and the passions of young readers. Adorned with the embellishments of poetry, they produce the epic; more concentrated in the story, and exchanging narrative for action, they become dramatic; allied with some great moral end, didactic, as in the *Telemaque* of Fenelon, and the *Belisaire* of Marmontel. They are often the vehicles of satire, as in the *Candide* and *Babouc* of Voltaire, and the *Gulliver's Travels* of Swift. They take a tincture from the learning and politics of the times, and are often made use of successfully to attack or to recommend the prevailing systems of the day. We have seen liberty and equality recommended from one publication, and French principles exposed in another. When the range of this kind of writing is so extensive, and its effect so great, it is evident that it ought to hold no mean rank among the productions of genius; and, in truth, there is hardly any department of literature in which we shall meet with more fine writing than in the best productions of this kind. It is not easy therefore to say, why the poet should have so high a place allotted him in the temple of Fame, and the romance-writer has by no means been measured by the pleasure he affords to his readers.²⁸

By setting the historical context in place, Barbauld provides herself with the ideal opportunity to continue her work, and gently moves into the typically Romantic realm of human nature and abstraction. She sees life as a process of moving forward, progress is inevitable, so therefore if mankind has to develop then it seems only natural that literature does too; and just as she, as a didactic writer, moved literature and learning forward so, to her mind, does Richardson. William Warner also highlights this evolution in literature by stating that 'The new criticism of the novel often bolsters its authority through an appeal to

²⁸ Barbauld, I, pp. viii-ix.

history', and that some 'commentators conceptualize novels as part of a progressive movement toward a valuably enlightened modernity.'²⁹ In 1804 this is precisely what Barbauld was aiming to do for both herself and her subject. For Barbauld, at every point in history there has been some kind of literary shift and only the most elite writers have had the wisdom and courage to be the shift-maker. Richardson is one of these men, and as a result changes literary history by pioneering a new mode of fiction writing; Richardson, for Barbauld, is 'head of a class'.³⁰ Barbauld's argument is convincing and she certainly covers every possible counter-argument including the 'romances of chivalry' and its 'heightened' style.³¹ She touches on the question and unification of truth and imagination in fiction, linking it to times past and the fact that we fully believe in what has come before until new boundaries have been reached and new history made. It is almost as if Barbauld is setting her reader a challenge, asking them what level of sophistication they aspire to, and just how adaptable and enlightened are they prepared to be; she almost goads them, but then withdraws preferring to go for a more eloquent approach:

Everyone knows the character of the romances of chivalry.- Amadis de Gaul at their head, with whose merits the English reader has lately been made acquainted in an elegant abridged version. They were properly historical, but they heightened the traditionary adventures of the heroes of their different countries, with the more wonderful stories of giants, enchantments, and other embellishments of the supernatural kind. But we are not to suppose that even these fictions were considered, as we now consider them, the mere play of the imagination: "*le vrai seul est aimable*" was always so far a maxim, that no work of imagination can greatly succeed, which is not founded upon popular belief; but what is *le vrai*? In those times talismans, and wounds cured by sympathetic powder, and charms of all kinds, were seriously credited.³²

Anna Barbauld does not seem to be satisfied with just any sort of fiction; for her fiction is about degrees of truth and the best fiction writers are those who understand, explore and then draw imitations of nature in their work. These facets

²⁹ Warner, p. 11.

³⁰ Barbauld, I, p. x.

³¹ Barbauld, I, p. xii.

³² Barbauld, I, p. xii.

seem vital to Barbauld, and this to her mind is what Richardson does; he draws upon the idea of the ordinary and the normal in life and reports them accordingly whilst at the same time including his own imaginative thoughts. Her praise of other authors who *contributed toward* Richardson's epiphanic moment again serves only to provide Richardson with the position of linchpin. She discusses Boccaccio, the Queen of Navarre, *contes* and *fabliaux* as types of novel but 'of a lighter texture', and turns to Scarron and Madame de la Fayette when describing those who made 'the first approach toward the modern novel of the serious kind'.³³ Even though she offers a modicum of praise, it really is only a gentle nod in their direction and goes on to say that:

There was still wanting a mode of writing which should connect the high passion, and delicacy of sentiment of the old romance, with characters moving in the same sphere of life with ourselves, and brought into action by incidents of daily occurrence.³⁴

It would be easy to say that Anna Barbauld simply damns everything that came before Richardson, but this is not what she does. Her approach is to offer a fair critique and explanation of everything she mentions intimating that perhaps Richardson would not have come to his point had these other genres not come before him. They were useful to both him and his readers, and highly apposite for each age. Barbauld is keen to point out that despite all the grand work that came before Richardson there was still something missing; a gap in the market, as it were, and Richardson's mode would fill it. Barbauld describes the established literary history as 'still wanting', and almost as if it were an inevitability Richardson's genre was naturally born out of a rich crop of early attempts.³⁵ Barbauld is methodical and deliberate in her construction of Richardson's ascent.

³³ Barbauld, I, p. xv. Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) was an Italian author and poet. He was a friend and correspondent of Petrarch (1304-1374) and wrote *Decameron*, a collection of approximately 100 novellas which was probably begun in 1350 and finished in 1353. *Decameron* is known as the medieval allegorical work of bawdy tales of love that largely influenced Chaucer, Queen Marguerite de Navarre (1492-1549) was a patron of humanists and reformers. She was a writer in her own right and largely known as an outstanding figure of the French Renaissance. The US translator and scholar, Samuel Putnam (1852-1950), described her as "The first modern woman"; *contes* is a French seventeenth century literary fairytale written for adults; *fabliaux* are thirteenth century comic tales of North-East France; Paul Scarron (1610-1660) was a seventeenth century French poet, dramatist and novelist; the Marquis de LaFayette (1757-1834) was a French aristocrat and military officer during the French Revolution.

³⁴ Barbauld, I, p. xvii.

³⁵ Barbauld, I, p. xvii.

Before moving on, it might be worth mentioning Barbauld's thoughts on Daniel Defoe and the possible influence that he may have had on Richardson:

The first author we had, who distinguished himself by natural painting, was that truly original genius De Foe; and if from any one Richardson caught, in some measure, his peculiar manner of writing, to him it must be traced, whose Robinson Crusoe and Family Instructor (the latter consisting of domestic dialogues) he must have read in his youth. They were both accurate describers, minute and circumstantial, but with this difference, that the minuteness of De Foe was more employed about things, and that of Richardson about persons and sentiments. No one ever knew like De Foe to give to fiction, by an accumulation of circumstance, and a grave natural way of telling the story, the most serious air of truth; except, indeed, Swift, in his Gulliver's Travels. De Foe wrote also some novels; I cannot speak of them, for I have not seen them: they do not appear to have attained much celebrity. Richardson was the man who was to introduce a new kind of moral painting; he drew equally from nature and from his own ideas. From the world about him he took his incidents, manners, and general character, of the times in which he lived, and from his own beautiful ideas he copied the sublime of virtue which charms us in his Clarissa, and that sublime of passion which interests us in his Clementina. That kind of fictitious writing of which he has set the example, disclaims all assistance from giants and genii.³⁶

Barbauld is attempting to make sense of Richardson's genius, and searches for any possible influences. She makes the assumption that due to certain similarities in style and the historical connection between Defoe and Richardson – Defoe was thirty years older than Richardson – that Richardson is bound to have read Defoe's work, and developed his youthful ideas accordingly. Barbauld's reason for making such comparisons can only be in order to further align her subject with writers of genius, as well as to continue along her path toward cementing her subject as one of the elite authors. However, Barbauld does not just want Richardson to stand alongside Defoe, she wants Richardson ahead of him and makes the point that some of Defoe's work 'do not appear to have attained much celebrity', but that Richardson's had.³⁷

³⁶ Barbauld, I, pp. xix-xxi.

³⁷ Barbauld, I, pp. xix-xxi.

But perhaps Barbauld's finest defence of the novel comes when she describes its most useful role, suggesting that after we have embraced the genre we 'rise better prepared to meet the ills of life with firmness, and to perform our respective parts on the great theatre of life'.³⁸ Once again Barbauld uses distinguished literary heavyweights to support her hypothesis:

It was the high and just praise given by our great critic, Dr. Johnson, to the author of *Clarissa*, that "he had enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue." The novelist has, indeed, all the advantage which Richardson made large use of, and he has besides the power of impressing them upon the heart through the best sensibilities of our nature. Richardson prided himself on being a moral and religious writer; and, as Addison did before him, he professed to take under his particular protection that sex which is supposed to be most open to good or evil impressions; whose inexperience most requires cautionary precepts, and whose sensibilities it is most important to secure against a wrong direction. The manner of this captivating writer was also new.³⁹

Anna Barbauld's ability to encapsulate – or offer a whistle-stop tour of – the history of literature in both England and abroad is admirable, and she could have been in preparation for a forthcoming project, the 50 volume collection *The British Novelists*.⁴⁰ Her relatively basic and speedy historicizing serves its purpose here amongst her biography of Richardson and it is within the realms of history, and French literary history at that, where she first mentions the word 'celebrity'.⁴¹

As mentioned earlier, Barbauld draws a comparison with other writers particularly when she begins her discussion of modes of fiction. Her argument is based primarily on there being three fundamental ways of 'carrying on a story'.⁴² In the first instance Barbauld suggests that:

³⁸ Barbauld, I, p. xxii.

³⁹ Barbauld, I, pp. xxii-xxiii.

⁴⁰ *The British Novelists: with an Essay; and Prefaces, Biographical and Critical*, by Mrs Barbauld, ed by Anna Laetitia Barbauld (London: F.C. & J. Rivington, 1810).

⁴¹ Barbauld refers to the French pastoral romance: 'I might indeed have mentioned before these a romance of a peculiar kind, the *Astrea* of d'Urfe, which all France read with eagerness at the time it was published. It is a pastoral romance, and its celebrity was, in great measure, owing to its being strongly seasoned with allusions to the amours of the court of Henry the Fourth.' (Barbauld, I, p. xiii)

⁴² Barbauld, I, p. xxiii.

the narrative or epic as it may be called; in this the author relates himself the whole adventure; this is the manner of Cervantes in his *Don Quixote*, and of Fielding in his *Tom Jones*. It is the most common way. The author, like the muse, is supposed to know everything; he can reveal the secret springs of actions, and let us into events in his own time and manner. He can be concise, or diffuse, according as the different parts of his story require it. He can indulge, as Fielding has done, in digressions, and thus deliver sentiments and display knowledge which would not properly belong to any of the characters. But his narration will not be lively, except he frequently drops himself, and runs into dialogue: all good writers therefore have thrown as much as possible of the dramatic into their narrative. Mad. d'Arblay has done this so successfully, that we have as clear an idea, not only of the sentiments, but the manner of expression of her different personages, as if we took it from the scenes in a play.⁴³

Barbauld is overt in her depiction of other authors, but it begs the question of loyalty. Had Anna Barbauld, or any editor for that matter, been employed to edit, critique or write a biography of any other author would she have perhaps turned the tables on Richardson? Not that it matters for this thesis, but it raises questions about the editing process and the fickle world of celebrity. Say, for arguments sake, that Richardson had not rather cleverly left his legacy - in the form of his private correspondence - and had Richard Phillips overlooked and not decided upon making Richardson the next chosen one to resurrect, then he might well have joined the ranks of many other dead and buried authors. Of course this is a hypothetical question, but a curious one nonetheless. When describing this first mode of writing, Barbauld makes it clear that in her opinion it is a lesser choice of mode; she name drops authors who use it and in doing so implies that they are lesser writers than Richardson. Unsurprisingly, one writer that Barbauld chooses to include in this part of her work is Henry Fielding (1707-1754), and much has been written about the relationship between the two men. The situation surrounding Richardson's affiliation with Fielding is somewhat complicated, and a lot of what has been reported is merely hearsay as there is very little definitive evidence to suggest that they really disliked one another, although Richardson was hurt by Fielding's derision of *Pamela*, and disrespect for Fielding weaves through

⁴³ Barbauld, I, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

the letters, but usually from Richardson's correspondents rather than from himself. Also Eaves and Kimpel assert that:

Very little is known of Richardson's relations with Fielding before the publication of *Clarissa*. The two men must have known of each other in 1740, when Richardson was printing the government organ, the *Daily Gazetteer*, and Fielding was writing for its opponent, the *Champion*.⁴⁴

As they were direct contemporaries, it is obvious that some comparisons would be made, and 'for the first time England had two contemporary writers of prose fiction whom the public could discuss seriously, two writers whose merits were almost entirely different.'⁴⁵ Most of what is written about them comes from Fielding's response to Richardson's first, and well received novel, *Pamela*. Fielding's *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* was released on 2nd April 1742 shortly after the third edition of *Pamela* had appeared, and soon after this Fielding's next work *Joseph Andrews* (1742), a novel based on the life of Pamela's brother, was published.⁴⁶ Richardson, according to Barbauld, 'was exceedingly hurt at this; the more so, as they had been upon good terms', but Eaves and Kimpel are quick to question Barbauld's assertion by saying that 'she may well have been guessing about his probable reaction to *Joseph Andrews*: there is no extant evidence to support her statement'.⁴⁷ As well as this, Richardson knew both of Fielding's sisters and he would develop a relatively short but close relationship with Fielding's younger sister Sarah, and in 1749 Richardson printed her novel *The Governess*.⁴⁸ As far as Barbauld's critical inclusion of Fielding as a

⁴⁴ T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 292.

⁴⁵ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 292.

⁴⁶ Even though Fielding never acknowledged himself as the writer of *Shamela*, it is generally attributed to him. Eaves and Kimpel confirm this 'It is generally assigned to Henry Fielding, and the evidence for his authorship, though not conclusive, is considerable: its general tone as well as particular objects of satire and tricks of style can be paralleled in Fielding's works, and several well-informed people at the time assigned it to Fielding'. (p. 127). It is also worth remembering that Richardson had published *Pamela* anonymously, so Fielding would not have recognised it as a work by Richardson.

⁴⁷ Barbauld, I, p. lxxix. Eaves and Kimpel, p. 294.

⁴⁸ According to Eaves and Kimpel (p. 202), Richardson met Sarah Fielding at the same time as meeting Jane and Margaret Collier around the time that he was writing *Clarissa* (1748-9). Their correspondence seems to have lasted close to a decade, but dwindled away when she moved to Bath in 1756. Richardson was to print two further works by Fielding: *Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (1757) and *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn* (1759). Richardson was also friendly with Fielding's other sister, Ursula.

writer of this mode is concerned, it would appear that her intention is to set about correcting this earlier misdemeanour of Fielding's (*Shamela*), by positioning him clearly as a writer who simply follows an already set mode of writing (and a lesser one at that) rather than one who is capable of pioneering something new. As mentioned earlier, Richardson's work was distinctly out of fashion by now, and it is possible that readers could have been amused by Fielding's parodic attack and Barbauld sees it as her job to clear it up. Barbauld does not discredit Fielding but uses a ploy much cleverer than that by simply trying to lose him among all of the other writers that she mentions. On doing so Barbauld moves on to her second assertion:

Another mode is that of memoirs; where the subject of the adventures relates his own story. Smollett, in his *Roderic Random*, and Goldsmith, in his *Vicar of Wakefield*, have adopted this mode; it confines the author's stile, which should be suited, though it is not always, to the supposed talents and capacity of the imaginary narrator. It has the advantage of the warmth and interest a person may be supposed to feel in his own affairs; and he can more gracefully dwell upon minute circumstances which have affected him. It has a greater air of truth, as it seems to account for the communication to the public. The author, it is true, knows everything, but when the secret recesses of the heart are to be laid open, we can hear no one with so much pleasure as the person himself. Marivaux, whose productions partly followed, and partly were contemporary with those of Richardson, has put the history of Marianne into her own mouth, and we are amused to hear her dwell on little touches which are almost too trivial to be noticed by any body but herself.

But what the hero cannot say, the author cannot tell, nor can it be rendered probable, that a very circumstantial narrative should be given by a person, perhaps at the close of a long life, of conversations that have happened at the beginning of it. The author has all along two characters to support, for he has to consider how his hero felt at the time the events to be related, and how it is natural he should feel them at the time he is relating them; at a period, perhaps, when curiosity is extinguished, passion cooled, and when, at any rate, the suspense which rendered them interesting is over. This seems, therefore, the least perfect mode of any.⁴⁹

Again, Barbauld brings other writers into her argument, and again only in order to glorify Richardson and his apparently new model. This time Smollett,

⁴⁹ Barbauld, I, pp. xxiv-xxvi.

Goldsmith and to a lesser degree Marivaux are under fire for choosing to write in a mode that Barbauld considers distinctly unreliable.⁵⁰ Particularly Goldsmith, and to degree Smollett, were writing shortly after Richardson and both chose to disregard his new mode of writing opting for the already established style of memoir. Barbauld is quick once again to champion her hero and utterly condemn his peers by claiming that their choice is by far the most flawed. Barbauld's turn of phrase is at once reproachful, accusatory and critical but her charm and literary command shrouds such reproofing language with elegance and flair before moving on to put the final nail in the coffin of any author who dares to challenge Richardson's new found method:

A third way remains, that of *epistolary correspondence*, carried on between the characters of the novel. This is the form made use of by Richardson and many others after, none, I believe, before him. He seems to have been led to it by circumstances in his early youth, which will be hereafter related. This method unites, in a good measure, the advantages of the other two; it gives the feelings of the moment as the writers felt them *at the moment*. It allows a very pleasing variety of stile, if the author has sufficient command of pen to assume it. It makes the whole work dramatic, since all the characters speak in their own persons. It accounts for breaks in the story, by the omission or loss of letters. It is incompatible with a speed of stile, but gives room for the graceful introduction of remark and sentiment, of any kind, almost, of digressive manner. But, on the other hand, it is highly fictitious; it is the most natural and the least probable way of telling a story. That letters should be written at all times, and upon every occasion in life, that those letters should be preserved, and altogether form a connected story, it requires much art to render specious. It introduces the inconvenience so much felt in dramatic writing, for want of a narrator; the necessity of having an insipid confidant to tell the circumstances

⁵⁰ Richardson and Smollett would have crossed paths on various occasions, and Eaves and Kimpel (p. 510) inform us that Richardson was not a great fan of Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle*. They also cite an incident when Richardson was, once again, offended by a writer (Smollett). This time it was an editing incident in the *Critical Review* of April 1756, rather than the writing of an entire novel such as Fielding's earlier misdeemeanour (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 511). Oliver Goldsmith met Richardson around 1756 but he was only starting out as a literary hack at the time of their meeting (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 461). In 1748, Richardson felt obliged to defend his position as pioneer of the new epistolary novel genre following suggestions that an anonymously written Spanish tale, *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), along with Madame La Fayette's *The Princess of Cleves* (1678), Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), and Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux's unfinished novels *La Vie Marianne* (1731-1745), and *Le Paysan Parvenu* (1735), all published earlier than *Pamela*, were of a similar type. Richardson claimed that 'All that know me, know, that I am not acquainted in the least with the French Language or Writers: And that it was Chance and not skill or Learning, that made me fall into this way of Scribbling.' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 583).

to that an author cannot relate in any other way. It obliges a man to tell himself, what perhaps no man would tell; and sometimes to repeat compliments which modesty would lead him to suppress: and when a long conversation is repeated, supposes a memory more exact than is generally found. Artificial as it therefore is, still as it enables an author to assume, in a lively manner, the hopes and fears, and passions, and to imitate the peculiar way of thinking of his characters, it became fashionable, and has been adopted by many both at home and abroad, especially by the French writers; their language, perhaps, being particularly suited to the epistolary stile, and Rousseau himself, in his *Nouvelle Heloise*, has followed the steps of our countryman.⁵¹

It is clear that Barbauld favours and overtly promotes Richardson's technique. She is clear in her claim that the epistolary style is the best, and that the author she is writing about has pioneered it. Barbauld intimates that the best writers would soon follow suit and implies that few before had such 'command of pen' as Richardson had.⁵² Barbauld reaches out toward the Continent to further promote Richardson and discusses the use of the epistolary style by writers such as Rousseau.⁵³ She maintains that the epistolary mode offers opportunity for drama, and indeed literary history tells us that some plays and operas were written directly off the back of *Pamela* and *Clarissa*.⁵⁴ However, the *pièce de resistance* for Richardson comes right at the end of her validation as she unites him with his public: 'our countryman' implies that he is one of them, that they should be proud of him, and that he stands shoulder to shoulder alongside them.⁵⁵ This is precisely what confirms a famous personality as a particular kind of celebrity; the type that is not too far away from the average man, a type that does not necessarily threaten the public but one that appears to be approachable, almost as if you would stand a

⁵¹ Barbauld, I, pp. xxvi-xxviii.

⁵² Barbauld, I, p. xxvi.

⁵³ For example, Laclos also chose the epistolary method for composing his work.

⁵⁴ *Pamela: or, Virtue Triumphant A Comedy* (James Dance, 1741); *Pamela. A Comedy* (Henry Giffard, 1742); *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded. An Opera* (Mr. Edge, 1742); *Pamela Commedia* (Carlo Goldoni, 1756). In his work *Samuel Richardson: A Bibliographical Record of His Literary Career with Historical Notes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936) William Merritt Sale Jnr. offers a detailed insight into Richardson's literary career up to that point as well as 'those books inspired by the publication of his novels' (Sale, p. xv). David Garrick had expressed an interest in playing the character of Lovelace 'in the dramatization of *Clarissa* which [Edward] Moore thought of writing' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 461). This never transpired.

⁵⁵ Barbauld, I, p. xxviii.

chance of being their friend and, as this thesis will show, Richardson was this type and did indeed, encourage such friendships.

Richardson's Early Life

Anna Barbauld introduces the next stage of her work by reminding the reader of her authorial intent. She suggests that 'it may not be undesirable to preface the collection with all the particulars which can now be collected, relative to him who was the centre of it', and so her biography begins.⁵⁶

Barbauld entices her reader into the realms of letter writing and reading with a short introduction:

Mr. Samuel Richardson, whose name and genius no English readers, and it may be added, few foreign ones, are unacquainted with, is one instance, among innumerable others, of natural talents making their way to eminence, under the pressure of narrow circumstances, the disadvantage of obscure birth, and the want of a liberal education.⁵⁷

This short passage provides the perfect platform from which to present the oft-used autobiographical letter from Richardson to his Dutch translator Johannes Stinstra. Barbauld's choice of letter is hardly surprising as it is both a perfect example for her progression into the arena of Richardson's life, as well as being an immensely significant document amongst Richardson scholars.⁵⁸ John Carroll emphasises its importance in the introduction to his 1964 edition *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*:

For the biographer and the critic the most important single letter by Richardson was to a man he never met, his Dutch

⁵⁶ Barbauld, I, p. xxviii.

⁵⁷ Barbauld, I, pp. xxviii-xxix. Johannes Stinstra (1708-1790) was a correspondent of Richardson's for 'a three-and-one-half years' from 14 September 1752 to 21 February 1756 where twenty-one letters passed between them (William C. Slattery, ed, *The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence and Stinstra's Prefaces to Clarissa* (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), pp. xiii-xiv). Eaves and Kimpel confirm these dates in their Appendix (p. 663 and p. 685). A Dutch clergyman from Harlingen, Stinstra also acted as Richardson's translator for *Clarissa* (1752-1755). The two men never met, and Slattery is only able to offer a hypothetical theory as to why the correspondence was terminated: 'perhaps he [Stinstra] was disappointed because Richardson was unable to aid either of Stinstra's friends (see Letters Nos. 21, 22 and 23)' (Slattery, p. xv).

⁵⁸ Barbauld and Slattery's texts correspond completely, other than a comma here and there, but whereas Barbauld only offers part (35 lines) of the Stinstra letter (the part that is, of course, useful to her argument), Slattery transcribes it in its entirety, all 23 pages. This is hardly surprising though given the nature of each text.

translator, Johannes Stinstra...The small, intimate details that Richardson might have dropped in conversations over a long period of time with a close friend are here concentrated in one letter.⁵⁹

Carroll makes an interesting point here about Richardson's personality at this time, highlighting his willingness to provide such intimate information to a virtual stranger, but Richardson had found the perfect opportunity to develop his fame further-a-field and began by courting his celebrity via his Dutch translator. It is useful to remember that Richardson and Stinstra had only recently made contact with one another, and Eaves and Kimpel tell us that Richardson engaged his friend William Duncombe to investigate the foreigner.⁶⁰ Based upon Duncombe's findings, and Stinstra's own 'long account of his life [...] Richardson wrote on 2 June 1753 his fullest extant account of his life.'⁶¹ Richardson's way of developing new correspondents was often unceremonious. For example, his initial communication with Hester Chapone was by way of 'a rather informal note on a blank page of a letter William Duncombe was writing her.'⁶² However, his engagement with Stinstra seems like an opportunistic means of linking himself with the Continent and, as a consequence, having the accolade of telling his friends that he had connections world-wide. Eaves and Kimpel substantiate this by telling us that a year after Richardson began his correspondence with Stinstra 'he told Lady Bradshaigh that he had friends in Paris, Gottingen, and Holland'.⁶³

Barbault uses the Stinstra letter to outline Richardson's early years, and to progress with her biography.⁶⁴ By writing his own biographical letter Richardson

⁵⁹ *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, edited, with an introduction by John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 18-19.

⁶⁰ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 321. William Duncombe (1690-1769) was a British author and playwright, and close friend and correspondent of Richardson. After winning a large sum of money in 1725 from a joint lottery ticket, Duncombe was able to retire from the Navy and lead the relaxed life of a literary man. The joint ticket holder was Elizabeth Hughes who Duncombe married in 1726.

⁶¹ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 321.

⁶² Eaves and Kimpel, p. 344. Hester Chapone (née Mulso) was a friend of the both the Duncombe's and the Highmore's (Joseph Highmore the painter, and his daughter Susanna who Richardson had been writing to for a number of years) and it is thought that Richardson met her through them. Hester Mulso married another young friend of Richardson's, John Chapone who died 6 months after they were married in 1761. Hester Chapone became a highly regarded and well known Bluestocking (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 344).

⁶³ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 414. Richardson had built up a network of *acquaintances* on the Continent, with connections in The Hague, Hanover, Amsterdam, Paris, Leipzig, and Leyden.

⁶⁴ See Barbault, I, pp. xxix-xxx for details of the sections of the letter that she elected to use. See Slatery, pp. 21-44 for the letter in its entirety.

is able to take control of his public persona, and determine the way in which his admirers perceive him. Essentially he is in a position to create whatever personal history he wants and is able to present himself in whatever manner he chooses. All self-indulgent aspects of his autobiography can go unchallenged.

In the Stinstra letter Richardson pays tribute to his father. However, his overtly hyperbolic language is worthy of comment as it draws certain parallels with the oft-grandiose approach that Barbauld takes when describing Richardson. Richardson needed to sell his idea of himself – as a successful, pioneering novelist and a friend of gentlemen – to Stinstra, his new found contact on the Continent. Successively, as editor, Barbauld's job was to help ensure the sale of Phillips's acquisition, and she does this by constructing her idea of Richardson as an eighteenth century literary celebrity. With the information gathered by William Duncombe, Richardson was fully aware of the stature of his new correspondent, and constructs his letter accordingly, painting a safe picture of an honest, hardworking and fair family. Richardson is determined to differentiate between his father's profession – a joiner – and the lesser role of the carpenter, as this distinction is all-important within the realms of Richardson's ideas of prestige, success and reputation. Barbauld's response to Richardson's letter is fair but non-committal, vaguely intimating that there may be discrepancies in Richardson's story. Either way, Barbauld is loyal to her subject and does not overstate whatever indiscretion there may or may not have been, choosing instead swiftly to move on with her work.

It is at this point that Barbauld embarks upon her version of Richardson's life. With information taken from his letters, ““or the obliging communications of some of his surviving contemporaries, or from printed biographical anecdotes””, Barbauld tries to piece together the life of a man not previously written about and, once again, she begins by defending him.⁶⁵ Up to this point there had been no evidence stating where Richardson had been born, and Barbauld claims that ‘it is said that Richardson, from some motives known only to himself, always avoided mentioning the town which gave him birth’, this provides Barbauld with the opportunity to address and provide whatever explanation is necessary to his

⁶⁵ McCarthy, p. 415.

critics.⁶⁶ She approaches the subject delicately, recognising that perhaps it is a sense of shame that had led Richardson to omit such a vital detail:

If this concealment arose from a reluctance to bring into view the obscurity and narrow circumstances in which his childhood was involved, the motive was an unworthy one, since they only served to reflect honour on a genius which could break through so thick a cloud. But, in truth, the candour and openness with which he relates the circumstances of his early life, ought to clear him from this imputation.⁶⁷

From Barbauld's approach to this subject it seems that she had already deduced that Richardson was overly sensitive about his birthplace and upbringing. Once again the issue of status is uppermost in his mind. When writing their chapter on Richardson's personality, Eaves and Kimpel tell us that 'he was sensitive with people who might think themselves above him.'⁶⁸ However, Richardson is also keen to leave information that does not lead his future audience too far in the wrong direction, striking an opportune balance. Barbauld is eager to exploit this and tells us that his 'father intended him for the church [...] which indeed his strong sense of religion, and the sobriety of his conduct, gave him an appropriate fitness for.'⁶⁹ However, Richardson's father was unable to support this way of life, simply being able to provide his son with "“only common school-learning.”"⁷⁰

It is important to remember that the majority of information accessible to Barbauld comes from Richardson – although Barbauld does include a letter from an anonymous woman at the end of her biography, and there is evidence that she

⁶⁶ Barbauld, I, p. xxxi. Eaves and Kimpel confirm that he was born and lived in Matlock, but John A. Dussinger states Mackworth (*ODNB*, 2004) as Richardson's place of birth, while Alan Dugald McKillop (*Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 286) offers only Richardson's own letter to Johannes Stinstra as a source to his birthplace: 'an unidentified place in Derbyshire.' In his 1922 series "Samuel Richardson and his Family Circle" (*Notes and Queries*, 12s, I-XXIII, (1922-1923)), Aelyn Lyell Reade offers an extensive insight into Richardson, but is unable to pin-point an exact birth-place preferring instead to cite sources such as Barbauld, and Richardson's daughter Anne, and grand-daughter, Sarah Moodie (both state Byfleet in Surrey as their 'family's place of origin' (Reade, XXII, p. 469). Matlock and Mackworth are both towns in Derbyshire with Matlock being approximately 34 miles north of Mackworth which is now a suburb of Derby.

⁶⁷ Barbauld, I, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

⁶⁸ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 538.

⁶⁹ Barbauld, I, p. xxxii.

⁷⁰ Barbauld, I, p. xxxii.

was connected, despite their age differences, to a number of Richardson's female correspondents such as Hester Chapone and Mary Mulso, she also met Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Carter, and received information, which she then ignored, from Richardson's grand-daughter, Sarah Moodie – whether it is a letter written by him to a correspondent or the correspondent to him.⁷¹ At all times, even in death, Richardson is in control of the situation and Barbauld has no choice but to report from his material.⁷² Obviously, Richardson could, and did, choose what to write, include and omit, as Carroll confirms: 'In January 1755 he began 'looking over & sorting, & classing' these epistles. 'This, when done,' he [Richardson] wrote, 'will amuse me by reading over again, a very ample Correspondence.''⁷³ Carroll continues to explain that Richardson intended to compare the earlier letters from each correspondent with newer ones, with the intention of 'improving from both.'⁷⁴ Eaves and Kimpel concur by stating that the correspondence 'still extant shows that he went over it late in life, arranging it in volumes, sometimes with indexes, deleting passages he did not consider suitable for publication and disguising names.'⁷⁵

Barbauld continues to offer an honest account of her subject and claims that 'some of the admirers of Richardson have wished to raise his character by asserting, that he possessed a knowledge of the classics'.⁷⁶ This she negates, and adds that Richardson himself had claimed that he had no experience of any other language other than his own. Barbauld constructs her celebrity ideal by taking an honest, humble, but consistent, approach. Her job as original biographer is to fill in the gaps left by her subject and, up to a point, she has no choice but to follow the way that he guides her. On occasion she tentatively mentions personality flaws that might not serve her argument, but then boldly defends him at others. This tactic offers the reader a seemingly balanced view of the subject.

Barbauld tries to excuse Richardson's relentless attempts at bolstering himself by drawing attention to his humble birth and then cementing this by exploring the

⁷¹ McCarthy, pp. 224-225 and pp. 413-415. McCarthy also suggests that Barbauld may have met Lady Bradshaigh (see McCarthy, p. 415).

⁷² Even though there are letters from others they have been selected and probably edited by Richardson.

⁷³ Carroll, p. 3.

⁷⁴ Carroll, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 436-437.

⁷⁶ Barbauld, I, p. xxxii.

wonders of being – and therefore of us having – a genius of modest beginnings. She likes the idea of him coming through against all odds, irrespective of rank or title, and she makes this another crucial focus of her celebrity construct. Genius, for Barbauld, is not only reserved for the grand. For Richardson though, being grand equalled success, status and power.

With regard to credibility and status, Barbauld recognises the importance of education, and she attempts to build a case for Richardson's cultural refinement. Her suggestion is that while he may have been gradually learning, it is more likely that he would have been assisted in certain areas:

It is said, indeed, that Dr. Young and he have been heard to quote Horace and other classics in their familiar conversations, and the letters of the pedant Brand in *Clarissa*, which are larded with Latin quotations, are adduced as proofs of his scholarship; but, with regard to the latter, it seems probable [...] that he was assisted by his friend Mr. Channing; and, as to the former, it is not unlikely that he might be familiar with a few of those Latin phrases which are used, in a manner proverbially, by scholars, as the garniture of their discourse; and that he might also remember something of the rudiments, which he probably learnt at school, neither of which circumstances imply any real knowledge of the language. His deficiencies in this respect he often lamented; and it is certain his style is as far as possible from that of a scholar. It abounds with colloquial vulgarisms, and has neither that precision, nor that tincture of classic elegance, which is generally the result of an early familiarity with the best models.⁷⁷

Barbauld continues her piece by once again drawing attention to the fact that times have changed and humanity has moved on, and that whilst once upon a time the 'unlearned Englishman' would have found it hard to progress in the world, this is no longer the case as 'our own tongue now contains productions of every kind sufficient to kindle the flame of genius in a congenial mind.'⁷⁸ Opportunity is aplenty in Barbauld's vision, all one has to do is notice it and embrace it. Barbauld makes it clear to her reader that, with the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Locke and Addison being so readily obtainable, educational enlightenment is available to all. Barbauld's discussion of education is extensive, and she uses it as a way of highlighting the argument that the eighteenth century celebrity was never

⁷⁷ Barbauld, I, pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

⁷⁸ Barbauld, I, p. xxxiv.

reliant upon wealth, domestic good fortune and classical education, but upon an eagerness to learn and an ability to observe and nurture. Barbauld utilises her talent as a poet to make her point:

In regular education, the various stimuli that produce this effect are subject to our observation, and distinctly marked; in like manner as we know the nature and quality of the seed we sow in gardens and cultured ground; but of those geniuses called self-taught, we usually know no more than we do of the wild flowers that spring up in the fields. We know very well they had a seed, but we are ignorant by what accidental circumstances the seed of one has been conveyed by the winds to some favourable spot, where it has been safely lodged in the bosom of the ground, nor why it germinates there, and springs up in health and vigour, while a thousand others perish. Some observation struck the young sense; some verse, repeated in his hearing, dropt its sweetness on the unfolding ear; some nursery story, told with impressive tones and gestures, has laid hold on the kindling imagination, and thus have been formed, in solitude and obscurity, the genius of a Burns or a Shakespeare.⁷⁹

Barbauld's poetic turn of phrase, alongside the analogous nature of her language is at once beautiful, but again seductive. The intimation is that, like Burns and Shakespeare, Richardson was one 'of the wild flowers that spring up in the fields.'⁸⁰ Her ability to connect nature to her argument makes for worthwhile reading and convincing reasoning, as she pits cultivated gardening against the wilderness of open countryside. It is as if she is asking her reader to make their choice, but is raising a disdainful eyebrow to those who deign to choose the former.

Barbauld continues to cite long passages from Stinstra's letter in an attempt to fill the gap between her audience and her subject. In the hope of furthering her favourable construction of Richardson she discusses his adolescence, and the relationships between him and his contemporaries, where he describes himself as being "noted for having invention."⁸¹ These snippets of autobiography legitimately help to fulfil any voyeuristic pleasures of the audience, and Barbauld makes an attempt at uniting the young Richardson with the famous novelist that

⁷⁹ Barbauld, I, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

⁸⁰ Barbauld, I, p. xxxv.

⁸¹ Barbauld, I, p. xxxvi.

he was to become. After revealing Richardson's early letter-writing employment – he used to write love-letters for young local women – Barbauld suggests that Richardson would have been equally as content with the commoners of his youth as with the elite of his later years:

Human nature is human nature in every class; the hopes and the fears, the perplexities and the struggles, of these low-bred girls in, probably, an obscure village, supplied the future author with those ideas, which, by their gradual development, produced the character of a *Clarissa* and a *Clementina*; nor was he probably happier, or amused in a more lively manner, when sitting in his grotto, with a circle of the best informed women in England about him, who, in after-times, courted his society, than in reading to these girls in, it may be, a little back-shop, or a mantua-maker's parlour, with a brick-floor.⁸²

Barbauld positions her subject in both humble and privileged environments, proving that one can lead to the other. Her aim is to appeal to the embracing and virtuous reader who has no place for exclusion and differentiation. Ironically, this is when Barbauld is at her most superficially engaging; she enters into a dialogue with her audience and her words appear to lift away from the page and into the drawing room of her reader as if inviting discussion. However, this is precisely the paradox, Barbauld appears to reach out to all, but is safe in the knowledge that her reader is likely to be a person of some advantage.

Barbauld meanders her way through Richardson's working life, sign-posting and discussing major events along the way. The obsessive nature of her insatiable need to show Richardson's lowly side is palpable as she introduces her reader to his first and constant, but 'humbler employment' as a printer.⁸³ Richardson was encouraged into the profession by his father who 'thought it would gratify his [son's] thirst for reading', but the plan back-fired as Richardson's employer, John Wilde, proved to be a man 'who grudged every hour to me that tended not to his

⁸² Barbauld, I, pp. xxxix-xli.

⁸³ Barbauld, I, p. xli.

profit'.⁸⁴ Barbauld is keen to mention that any spare time that Richardson received was spent reading 'for improvement of my mind'.⁸⁵

While working for Wilde, Richardson had become 'engaged in a correspondence with a gentleman [...] who, had he lived, intended high things for me', the implication being that Richardson had found himself a patron.⁸⁶ This is a significant point in Barbauld's mapping out of Richardson's professional life as it exhibits her subject as a promising and popular youngster who had the ability to impress a man 'greatly my superior [...] and of ample fortune.'⁸⁷ Barbauld also claims that the connection to this unnamed man would have encouraged 'the young apprentice, in gaining that fluency of pen which he was remarkable for'.⁸⁸

On finishing his apprenticeship, Richardson was engaged 'as a compositor and corrector of the press to a printing-office, and part of the time as an overseer'.⁸⁹ Here he gained the necessary experience, and worked his way up, to be in a position to set up his own business 'in a court in Fleet-street', before moving 'into Salisbury-court'.⁹⁰ From here Richardson built his famous and successful printing empire, and Barbauld chooses to describe him as being 'not one of those who make genius an excuse for idleness. He had been diligent and conscientious as an apprentice, he was assiduous and liberal as a master.'⁹¹ For Barbauld, Richardson was a hard-working, fair leader of men who gained a solid reputation within his profession:

Beside the work of a printer, he did a good deal of business for the booksellers, in writing for them indexes, prefaces, and, as he styles them, honest dedications. These humble employments tended to facilitate to him the use and management of the pen. Mr. Richardson's punctuality, and the honour and generosity of his dealings, soon gained him friends, and his business greatly flourished.⁹²

⁸⁴ Barbauld, I, pp. xli-xlii.

⁸⁵ Barbauld, I, p. xlii.

⁸⁶ Barbauld, I, p. xlii.

⁸⁷ Barbauld, I, p. xlii.

⁸⁸ Barbauld, I, p. xliii. There are no extant suggestions as to who this man may have been.

⁸⁹ Barbauld, I, p. xliv.

⁹⁰ Barbauld, I, p. xliv.

⁹¹ Barbauld, I, p. xliv.

⁹² Barbauld, I, pp. xliv-xlv.

The biography moves immediately to Richardson's involvement with the printing of many newspapers and periodicals of the time, including the *True Briton*, the *Daily Journal*, and the *Daily Gazetteer*.⁹³ Barbauld is also keen to mention some of his connections at the time: the Duke of Wharton, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Arthur Onslow, and the writer and scholar, Dr. Edward Young. Even though Barbauld does not shy away from the scandal of the *True Briton*, she is quick to gloss over it by only affording it the briefest of mentions: 'Some of the numbers of the True Briton were prosecuted, but Mr. R. escaped, as his name did not appear.'⁹⁴ She then quickly moves on to more high-brow affiliations, particularly Richardson's connection to the Speaker of the House of Commons, who she claims 'had a great regard for him, and often received him at his house in Ember-court', and Richardson's contract to print the 'Journals of the House of Commons'.⁹⁵ Barbauld is only concerned with heightening the profile of Richardson, and attempts to do this by showing his growing popularity amongst the elite, and by name-dropping people of supposed eminence. However, she does not enter into any detailed discussion of one of these associates: Philip James Wharton, Duke of Wharton and Northumberland.⁹⁶

Before discussing Richardson's personal life, Barbauld wants to offer her reader a further insight into his achievements and way of living:

He was chosen master of his company, an office, which, in the Stationer's Company, is not only honourable but lucrative, in 1754; on which occasion one of his friends tells him, that though he did not doubt his going very well through every other part of the duty, he feared his habitual abstemiousness would allow him to make but a very poor figure at the city feasts. His indulgences were not of the sensual kind – he had, according to the salutary

⁹³ The *True Briton* was a twice weekly (Monday and Friday) publication which ran from 1723 to 1724. Richardson is thought to have printed the first six editions, allegedly writing the sixth in its entirety (though, due to its dubious reputation as a vehicle for political scandal, Richardson's daughters refuted this allegation some years later in the *Universal Magazine's* biography of their father). The *Daily Journal* ran from c.1721 to 1737, and Richardson was definitely printing it from 1724-1736 (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 45). The *Daily Gazetteer* ran from 1735-1748. Evidence shows the likelihood of Richardson's printing involvement with it being from its beginning to at least 1738 (Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 65-66), and that he had some interest in it until the appearance, in mid 1747, of an anonymous article, which caused Richardson 'a good deal of Trouble' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 69). At this point Richardson extricated himself from all involvement with the paper.

⁹⁴ Barbauld, I, p. xlv.

⁹⁵ Barbauld, I, p. xlv.

⁹⁶ Wharton was a renowned rake, politician, and founding member of the Hell-Fire Club. Richardson's villain, Lovelace, is reportedly fashioned on Wharton <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>> [accessed 15 July 2007]

custom of the London citizens, a country residence; first at North-end, near Hammersmith, and afterwards at Parson's-green, where he spent the time he could spare from business, and seldom without visitors. He loved to encourage diligence and early rising amongst his journey-men, and often hid a half-crown amongst the letters, so that the first who came to work in a morning might find it. At other times he brought, for the same purpose, fruit from his garden.⁹⁷

Here we see the representation of an upstanding man of great success, who shared a sense of humour with his friends, and encouraged his workers with benevolent bonuses. Barbauld selects passages from Richardson's own words that can only serve to glorify him.

At this point we see a shift in Barbauld's biography as she moves from the professional life of Samuel Richardson to the domestic. Again Barbauld allows Richardson to speak for himself by quoting a large section of a letter sent to Lady Bradshaigh (then under her pseudonym Belfour) from Richardson in December 1748.⁹⁸ In the letter Richardson reports on his two happy marriages, and shows his grief and commitment to his first wife, Martha Wilde (the daughter of his first master, Jonathan Wilde), as well as the mention of the numerous deaths of his children, friends and family. Barbauld's inclusion of this information, spoken in Richardson's own voice, garners sympathy from her reader bringing them yet closer to her subject.

Barbauld wants the public to receive a panoramic vision of Richardson, but only ever on her terms, and largely based upon the finer aspects of Richardson's life. We should keep remembering that, other than the author himself and possibly some of his relatives, Barbauld was the first scholar to work on Richardson's manuscripts and only has what he deigned to leave her. Barbauld's domestic picture is one of a fatherly interest and equality:

He had yet great comfort in his family; his daughters grew up under his tuition, amiable and worthy; they were carefully educated, and engaged his fondest affections [...] They were all much employed in writing for him, and transcribing his letters; but his chief amanuensis was his daughter Martha.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Barbauld, I, pp. xlvi-xlvii.

⁹⁸ For details of this letter see Barbauld, IV, 226-227.

⁹⁹ Barbauld, I, p. li.

For the nineteenth century reader, Richardson would have seemed ahead of his time, a quality which must have appealed to Barbauld. Whether or not Richardson would have educated his daughters with such alacrity had any of his sons survived is impossible to know, but Anna Barbauld does not have to concern herself with such a predicament and can persist in extolling her subject on high.

The biography momentarily moves back to Richardson's business ventures when discussing his partnership with Catherine Lintot.¹⁰⁰ Chronologically, the inclusion of this information makes little sense as this happened toward the end of Richardson's life, but Barbauld manages to unite it with Richardson's enduring commitment to provide for his family.

At this point Barbauld moves away from Richardson and his business empire and back to her preferred biographical territory: Richardson the genius. It is within this subject area that she is once again afforded the opportunity for poetic flourish. Interestingly, Barbauld adapts her style of writing to correspond with the subject that is being considered, so when she discusses Richardson-the-businessman her manner reflects this by adopting a more resolute style befitting a more resolute subject, vis-à-vis when she examines Richardson-the-genius, we see poetic passages reflecting an artistic subject:

But the genius of Richardson was not destined to be forever employed ushering into the world the productions of others. Neither city feasts and honours, nor printing law books and acts of parliament, nor the cares of a family, and the management of so large a concern of business, could quench the spark that glowed within him, or hinder the lovely ideas that played about his fancy, from being clothed in words, and produced to captivate the public ear. The printer in Salisbury-court was to create a new species of writing; his name was to be familiar in the mouths of the great, the witty, and the gay, and he was destined to give one motive more to the rest of Europe, to learn the language of his country.¹⁰¹

This is indeed a great accolade from Barbauld, and she seduces her reader by rhythmically listing Richardson's achievements, as she makes way for and finally reaches the area which, arguably, the majority of her audience would have been

¹⁰⁰ Catherine Lintot (1733-1816) was a long established friend and correspondent of Richardson; as an only child, her father, had left his business to her when he died in 1758.

¹⁰¹ Barbauld, I, pp. li-lii.

most interested in. Barbauld is telling us that no matter how successful a printer he was, and no matter who he worked with or for, nothing would satisfy this great man more than novel writing. Barbauld continues her defence of the novel (perhaps more specifically the romantic novel) by enforcing that whatever great achievements there are, the world of the novel is amongst them if not on an altogether higher plane to them.

Fame Awaits: *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded*

Barbauld structures her discussion of *Pamela* (1740) by presenting a synopsis of the novel, followed by a short analysis of its possible meaning, and a reading of Richardson's intention. As we know, Richardson had an early attraction to the epistolary form and this is where Barbauld begins. She reports that on occasion he would write for certain booksellers and that it was 'They [who] desired him to give them a volume of Familiar Letters, upon a variety of supposed occasions', and so 'He began, but, letter producing letter, like John Bunyan, "as he pulled, it came;" till, unexpected to himself, the result was his *History of Pamela*.'¹⁰²

Barbauld is quick to tell her reader that Richardson completed his first novel in just 'three months', before going on to defend his writing style.¹⁰³ There is a sufficient likelihood that the reader of Barbauld's edition would either have already been a reader of Richardson's novels, or would be inspired to become one. So by pre-empting any criticism of Richardson's early writing style, and offering a reason for it she would be dispelling any criticism of it before it had begun. She argues that 'The idea he set out with of writing letters for rather the lower class, probably determined him to the station of his heroine, and the simplicity of her language.'¹⁰⁴ For Barbauld, Richardson's overwhelming theme in the novel is that of virtue; virtue conquers all, and according to Barbauld that includes libertinism as well as the brutality of life's ordeals.¹⁰⁵ Barbauld's interpretation of the novel is accurate, reasonably concise, and largely devoid of

¹⁰² Barbauld, I, pp. lii-liii.

¹⁰³ Barbauld, I, p. liv.

¹⁰⁴ Barbauld, I, p. liv. In December 1741 Richardson added two further volumes.

¹⁰⁵ Barbauld claims that the first lesson in *Pamela* is concerned with 'reclaim[ing] a libertine by the influence of virtuous affection', and that the second is 'to conduct virtue safe and triumphant through the severest trials, to an honourable reward.' (Barbauld, I, p. liv).

personal opinion, so for the purposes of this thesis there seems little point in including a detailed review of it.¹⁰⁶

Immediately after Barbauld's synopsis of *Pamela* she reports on its reception amongst the eighteenth century public, and according to Barbauld: 'It was received with a burst of applause from all ranks of people.'¹⁰⁷ Richardson received 'numberless compliments' once he had decided to make himself known as the author, and Barbauld includes stories confirming the popularity and social importance of the novel:

All that read were his readers. Even at Ranelagh, those who remember the publication say, that it was usual for ladies to hold up volumes of Pamela to one another, to shew they had got the book that everyone was talking of. The tendency of this novel was held to be so excellent, that it was recommended by Dr. Slocock, even from the pulpit.¹⁰⁸

This is undoubtedly the starting point of Richardson's public fame and celebrity. Barbauld makes grand statements about his popularity and importance, and they seem to be largely true. Richardson, just like his young heroine, had entered the high-life, and from this point onward his life would never be the same. Barbauld follows Richardson's lead by name-dropping; she is unashamed to state that 'he received spontaneous eulogiums from many of the first authors of the age', and mentions Alexander Pope, John Chetwynd, Ralph Allen and James Leake.¹⁰⁹ Barbauld is quick to inform the reader that: 'The tendency of this novel was held to be so excellent, that it was recommended by Dr. Slocock, even from the pulpit' and that 'Mr. Chetwynd says, "that if all other books were to be burnt, this book, next to the Bible, ought to be preserved."'"¹¹⁰ Richardson had secured his place amongst the greats of the day, and his work was 'immediately translated

¹⁰⁶ For Barbauld's full synopsis see Barbauld, I, pp. liv-lvii.

¹⁰⁷ Barbauld, I, p. lviii.

¹⁰⁸ Barbauld, I, p. lviii.

¹⁰⁹ Barbauld, I, p. lviii. Alexander Pope (1688-1744) poet and satirist, either the British diplomat and politician the 2nd Viscount John Chetwynd (1689-1767) or his nephew the peer and politician John Chetwynd-Talbot (1749-1793), Ralph Allen (1693-1764), philanthropist, postal reformer and Fielding's patron, and James Leake (1686-1764), Bath bookseller and Richardson's brother-in-law.

¹¹⁰ Barbauld, I, p. lviii. Dr. Benjamin Slocock (1691-1753), the chaplain of St. Saviour's Church in Southwark, London, was an admirer of Richardson and left him the sum of £10.00 in his will (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 123-124).

into French and Dutch.’¹¹¹ Barbauld is not only aligning Richardson alongside the aforementioned men, but is also showing the importance of his work as well as the relevance of its genre.

Having left her nineteenth century audience by transporting back in time to the publication of *Pamela* in 1740, Barbauld re-enters the nineteenth century to consolidate the importance of the novel, and its author, to her reader:

The fame of this once favourite work is now somewhat tarnished by time, as well as eclipsed by the author’s subsequent publications; but the enthusiasm with which it was received, shews incontrovertibly, that a *novel* written on the side of virtue was considered as a new experiment.¹¹²

Barbauld addresses her audience directly and attempts to justify Richardson. She is aware that he and his works may be dated, but needs her audience to know that he was once eminent and pioneering. Barbauld encourages her reader by insisting that by ‘Appreciating it [*Pamela*] at this distance of time, we must acknowledge that the faults are great, but the beauties are genuine.’¹¹³

In order to make it easier for her reader, Barbauld’s didactically analytical approach to *Pamela* is to take each character separately, and position them within a particular scene.¹¹⁴ Her descriptions are thorough enough that they are a lesson in character writing, narrative building and at times provide some historical reference. As she outlines Richardson’s strengths, she provides her reader with the opportunity to learn by pointing out specific passages for the eager reader to refer to and look out for:

It would not be easy to find a prettier picture of low life, and of true English low life, in its most respectable garb; made respectable by strict honesty, humility, patience of labour, and domestic affection; the whole rendered saintly and venerable by a touching air of piety and resignation, which pervades all their sentiments. The behaviour of the old man, when he walks to Mr. B.’s to enquire after his child; and his humble grief, is truly

¹¹¹ Barbauld, I, p. lx.

¹¹² Barbauld, I, p. lx.

¹¹³ Barbauld, I, p. lx.

¹¹⁴ Richardson would have appreciated this didactic curve because, as well as his novels being for enjoyment, they were also a tool through which to learn. It is important to remember that *Pamela*, began as a series of instructive letters, designed to help ‘those country readers, who were unable to indite for themselves.’ (Barbauld, I, p. lii).

pathetic. The language of the good couple is simple, without being vulgar.¹¹⁵

Richardson gives his 'low life' characters dignity by drawing a clear depiction of how worthy and respectable this kind of life could be; Goodman Andrews (Pamela's father) and his wife are impressive illustrations of this, and Barbauld points this out to a potential, new nineteenth century audience.¹¹⁶ Her decision to focus more on the 'people in low life' is surely reflective of Richardson's strong ability to write such characters well, but also to applaud the humble beginnings of her subject.¹¹⁷ As for the other characters in the novel, Barbauld pays less attention. She offers each of them a line or two, but nothing more than that, and tenders a mere eleven lines on the male protagonist of the piece, Mr. B.

Barbauld is primarily concerned with imparting an accurate account of the story's intention, and she focuses largely upon what she considers to be its moral: virtue rewarded. Richardson's heroine has no option other than to be virtuous, failing this the novel, and its writers' personal goal and ensuing reputation, would fail, so as 'long as Pamela is solely occupied in schemes to escape from her persecutor, her virtuous resistance obtains our unqualified approbation.'¹¹⁸ Again we see Barbauld closing the gap between reader and novel (and as a consequence also the novelist), as she points out that they are being led by Pamela. According to Barbauld the reader shadows her every move, bringing them closer to their heroine. Due to the character's likeability, the reader is prepared to move in whatever direction she wants them to go, so that when Pamela 'begins to entertain hopes of marrying him (Mr. B), we admire her guarded prudence, rather than her purity of mind.'¹¹⁹ Barbauld fairly critiques the novel, asking questions of it and offering candid solutions:

Her staying in his house a moment after she found herself at liberty to leave it, was totally unjustifiable; her repentant lover ought to have followed her to her father's cottage, and to have married her from thence.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Barbauld, I, pp. lxi-lxii.

¹¹⁶ Barbauld, I, p. lxii.

¹¹⁷ Barbauld, I, p. lxii.

¹¹⁸ Barbauld, I, p. lxiii.

¹¹⁹ Barbauld, I, p. lxiii.

¹²⁰ Barbauld, I, p. lxiv.

While Barbauld is obviously a great advocate of Richardson, and largely a supporter of his choices, she also understands that she has a responsibility to help sell her text, and her subject, to a nineteenth century audience, while at the same time keeping her own reputation in tact. Richardson, at the time of *Pamela*'s publication, had been criticised for 'the indelicate scenes in this novel', and Barbauld in no way tries to justify them, preferring instead to tell of 'ladies complain[ing] they cannot read them without blushing.'¹²¹

At this point Barbauld embarks upon a ten page discussion of the authenticity of *Pamela*, where she includes a lengthy transcript of a letter from Richardson to Aaron Hill.¹²² In it Richardson divulges his original inspiration for the novel, along with its primary plot, an accurate account of the time-line of his composition of it, and the reaction he received from the first people to read it.¹²³ Richardson also discusses his adoption - 'to screen myself behind' - of the character of Editor rather than appearing as himself as its author.¹²⁴ Barbauld's decision to include such a long letter in her work is justifiable because, with such riches found within it, a biographer would be at pains to deliver anything better to their reader. However, for the purposes of this thesis there is little point in analyzing it further.¹²⁵

It is without doubt that Richardson's innovative model had propelled him toward the highest echelons of literary success with this apparently new and inventive style of writing and story-telling. The public were intrigued and mesmerised, and Richardson had set the eighteenth century imagination alive. *Pamela* was asking questions of its reader and encouraging new kinds of responses; Richardson had become a celebrity, and the public wanted to hear from him. Barbauld includes a passage which not only exhibits his evident humour and *penchant* for flirtation, but also confirms the success of his novel as well as his own rising fame and popularity:

¹²¹ Barbauld, I, p. lxvii.

¹²² See chapter 2 for information on Aaron Hill.

¹²³ Richardson's initial audience for *Pamela* were 'my worthy-hearted wife, and the young lady who is with us'. The dates he offers are 'I began it Nov. 10, 1739, and finished it Jan. 10, 1739-1740.' (Barbauld, I, p. lxxv).

¹²⁴ Barbauld, I, p. lxxvi.

¹²⁵ For further information on this letter, and Barbauld's reaction to it see Barbauld, I, pp. lxvii-lxxviii.

The author received anonymous letters from six ladies, who pressed him to declare, upon his honour, which they were sure he was too much of a gentleman to violate, whether the story was true or false, and they hoped Mrs. B if there was such a lady, would not be against satisfying a request which redounded so much to her honour; they tell him also, that they have taken an oath to keep the secret, if he will entrust them with it; and that they will never cease writing till he has obliged them. He tells them, in his answer, that it was never known, since the world began, that a secret was kept which had been entrusted to six ladies, and pretends that he was not at liberty to break the trust; also, that they are very unreasonable in expecting him to give up the name of his heroine to ladies who keep their own names a secret.¹²⁶

Following Richardson's letter to Hill, Barbauld rejoins her text with a discussion of the sequel to *Pamela*. According to Barbauld, and spurred on by the 'spurious continuation' *Pamela in High Life*, Richardson 'prepared to give a second part' to the awaiting public.¹²⁷ Barbauld shows Richardson's determination and strength of character by discussing his refusal to follow the suggestions of Pope and Warburton, who had tried to persuade Richardson to make his sequel 'a vehicle for satire'.¹²⁸ She is also under no illusion that 'Richardson did not [...] possess those light touches of delicate humour which were required in it; and the knowledge of the great world he had yet to acquire.'¹²⁹ By referring to Pope and Warburton – she also mentions Swift – Barbauld is again aligning her subject with established literary heavyweights in an attempt to reinforce his status.

Barbauld supports the argument that second parts are often unnecessary, claiming that Richardson's text is 'superfluous' and 'dull' because 'the plan was

¹²⁶ Barbauld, I, pp. lxvii-lxviii.

¹²⁷ Barbauld, I, p. lxxvi. *Pamela's* enormous success (William B. Warner, in *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain 1684-1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. xii, classifies *Pamela* as 'the most popular of all eighteenth-century British novels') was not without criticism, and a large number of disparaging responses and spurious alternatives (Henry Fielding's *Shamela* (April, 1741); *Pamela Censured* (April, 1741) published by James Roberts; *Pamela's Conduct in High Life* (May, 1741) by John Kelly; Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* (June, 1741); *True Anti-Pamela* (June, 1741) by James Parry; the poem *Pamela Versified* (July-August, 1741) by George Bennet; a serialization, *The Life of Pamela* in twenty-four parts, began in August 1741, and many more), were published soon after, prompting Richardson to publish his own, marginally less appreciated, continuation of the novel in December 1741.

¹²⁸ Barbauld, I, p. lxxvi.

¹²⁹ Barbauld, I, p. lxxvii.

already completed'.¹³⁰ At this point Barbauld suggests that it is, in some way, a text of repentance, written in order to correct mistakes made in the first part, her claim being that 'It is less a continuation than the author's defence of himself.'¹³¹

Throughout the biography Barbauld frequently adjoins apparently unrelated points to the ends of her paragraphs, and at the closing stages of her discussion about *Pamela in High Life*, she does the same by inappropriately adding on a sentence about the Goldoni plays which were inspired by Richardson's novel.¹³² Her decision to do this, on seemingly random occasions, is strange and inconsistent with her usually flawless grammar and narrative structure, and it appears to be done because she has either forgotten to include it elsewhere, has not found an appropriate place to situate it or needs to promote her subject in some way. In terms of Barbauld's compositional practice, rather than taking the time to write through several more cohesive drafts it would appear as if she was simply adding bits of newly acquired information, almost at random, to an already reasonably accomplished first draft. We already know that Richard Phillips was an unrelenting boss, so it is highly probable that Barbauld was under pressure from her impatient publisher.¹³³ Barbauld begins to draw her discussion of *Pamela* to an end, but not before making one final attempt to promote Richardson's significance:

It may be worth mentioning, that this novel changed the pronunciation of the name Pamela, which before was pronounced Pamela, as appears from that line of Pope - "The gods to curse Pamela with her prayers". Aaron Hill thus writes about it: "I have made" (viz. in some commendatory verses he wrote upon the occasion) "the *e* short in your Pamela; I observe it is so in her own pretty verses at parting. I am deriving her name from her qualities; only that the Greek [...] allude[s] much too faintly to the all-reaching extent of her sweetness;" and he adds, "that Mr. Pope has taught half the women in England to pronounce it wrong."¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Barbauld, I, p. lxxvii.

¹³¹ Barbauld, I, p. lxxvii.

¹³² The Carlo Goldoni plays, *Pamela Nubile* and *Pamela Maritata* were written in c.1750, and performed at Teatro Capranica, Rome in 1760. Both he and Francois-Marie Arouet Voltaire (Voltaire's *Nanine* (1749) is loosely based on *Pamela*) alter certain parts of Richardson's original, for example they change Pamela's status to the daughter of a lord who is in disguise.

¹³³ Barbauld, I, p. lxxviii.

¹³⁴ Barbauld, I, p. lxxviii.

Barbauld's section on *Pamela* would be incomplete without some reference to Henry Fielding and his sardonic response to Richardson's novel. The two-page conclusion to her analysis of *Pamela* is only concerned with Fielding, and she insists that *Joseph Andrews* was written simply 'in ridicule of Pamela.'¹³⁵ In it Barbauld begins by delicately, but assuredly, making it clear that Fielding's rise to fame came slightly later, but 'soon after', Richardson's.¹³⁶ This minor difference is important to Barbauld as she builds her case for Richardson as a literary pioneer. A brief, but accurate, précis of Fielding's novel ensues, and she offers a two-line introduction to a couple of its characters. Barbauld wants to make clear the effect this publication had on Richardson who, according to her, was 'was exceedingly hurt [...] the more so, as they had been on good terms, and he was very intimate with Fielding's two sisters.'¹³⁷

She briefly begins to explore the differences between Richardson and Fielding and deduces that they each had a quality that the other wished to possess. For Barbauld, Richardson was devoid of 'the ease' which Fielding enjoyed, and lacked 'a genuine flow of humour, and a rich variety of comic character.'¹³⁸ Whilst Richardson's ability to 'describe a consistently virtuous character' and write with 'deep pathos' impresses her and illuminates her argument further.¹³⁹ Barbauld has a wry smile to herself when she reminds her reader that despite them becoming rivals - with Fielding 'parodying Pamela, and Richardson asserting, as he does in his letters, that the run of Tom Jones is over, and that it would soon be forgotten' - they now stand alongside one another on the bookshelf.¹⁴⁰ She concludes here that rather than burying his head and being disheartened by the criticism, Richardson rises to a new challenge: *Clarissa*.

¹³⁵ Barbauld, I, p. lxxix. *Joseph Andrews* (1742), supposedly about Pamela's brother, began as a parody of Richardson's *Pamela*. Arguably, it marked the point at which Fielding's career as a serious novelist began.

¹³⁶ Barbauld, I, p. lxxix.

¹³⁷ Barbauld, I, p. lxxix. The Fielding sisters that Barbauld refers to are likely to be Sarah Fielding (1707-1754), a relatively successful writer and translator. Her novel, *The Governess* (1749), would have appealed to Barbauld's pedagogical aspirations as, according to her page in the *ODNB*, it was one of the first books about school for young girls. Sarah Fielding also translated Xenophon's *Memoirs of Socrates* (1762), and Richardson printed some of her works. The other Fielding sister that Barbauld alludes to is more difficult to identify as there were three others: Catharine (1708-1750), Ursula (1709-1750) and Beatrice (1714-1751). A fourth sister, Anne, died in 1716 aged three).

¹³⁸ Barbauld, I, pp. lxxix-lxxx.

¹³⁹ Barbauld, I, p. lxxx.

¹⁴⁰ Barbauld, I, p. lxxx.

Fame Abounds: *Clarissa: Or, the History of a Young Lady*

But Pamela, captivating as was the publication, shewed only the dawn of our author's genius; and, if he sunk in the second part of it, it was only to rise with new lustre in *Clarissa*, the first two volumes of which were published eight years after the preceding.

The production upon which the fame of Richardson is principally founded, that which will transmit his name to posterity, as one of the first geniuses of the age in which he lived, is undoubtedly his *Clarissa*.¹⁴¹

Barbauld begins her section on *Clarissa* (1748) by once again extolling the virtues of Richardson. Her appraisal of the novel runs for some thirty-three pages, and includes a brief but skilful synopsis of its extensive plot, as well as an introduction and breakdown of the major characters. Barbauld then offers a critique of the work and finishes with a few examples of public reaction. Her synopsis is clever as she disposes of the laborious two-volume entry into the novel and only, at this stage, does she offer her reader enough to entice them to read it.¹⁴² The one hundred and fifty-nine word outline to one of the longest novels in the history of English literature is a true testament to Barbauld's editing skills. Of course the delicacy with which Richardson constructs his narrative is missing, but it indubitably does the job that it is meant to do for the purpose of her project.

As Barbauld moves on from her synopsis she begins to offer a more frank critique of *Clarissa*, stating that: 'the first volumes are somewhat tedious, from the prolixity incident to the letter-writing, and require a persevering reader to get through them'.¹⁴³ However she is quick to add that, thanks to Richardson's style, the reader that chooses to do this will become captivated and usurped by his characters and their lives. Barbauld is hoping to convey to her audience the genius of Richardson's ability to draw a convincing character, a character that engages its reader:

In consequence of this, our feelings are not transient, elicited here and there by a pathetic stroke; but we regard his characters as real personages, whom we know and converse with, and whose fate remains to be decided in the course of events.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Barbauld, I, pp. lxxx-lxxxi.

¹⁴² See Barbauld, I, pp. lxxxi-lxxxii.

¹⁴³ Barbauld, I, p. lxxxii.

¹⁴⁴ Barbauld, I, p. lxxxii.

Barbauld's insistence that *Clarissa* is just a 'simple' story, with a basic plot, is accurate, but the readers' experience when he commits to Richardson's novel is unique, as he is forced to live alongside the narrative, and subsequently becomes involved in it.¹⁴⁵ The novel simply demands that.

Barbauld addresses the issue of the novels' length by congratulating Richardson on his ability to sustain such a lengthy narrative. She commends him for resisting the involvement of additional 'plots, digressions and episodes', and states that 'with *Clarissa* it begins,-with *Clarissa* it ends.'¹⁴⁶ In order to describe, and therefore further endorse Richardson's extensive work, Barbauld chooses quixotically to position it, enticing her audience further:

We do not come upon unexpected adventures and wonderful recognitions, by quick turns and surprises: we see her fate from afar, as it were through a long avenue, the gradual approach to which, without ever losing sight of the object, has more of simplicity and grandeur than the most cunning labyrinth that can be contrived by art. In the approach to the modern country seat, we are made to catch transiently a side-view of it through an opening of trees, or to burst upon it from a sudden turning in the road; but the old mansion stood full in the eye of the traveller, as it drew near it, contemplating its turrets, which grew larger and more distinct every step that he advanced; and leisurely filling his eye and his imagination with still increasing ideas of its magnificence. As the work advances the character rises; the distress is deepened; our hearts are torn with pity and indignation; bursts of grief succeed one another, till at length the mind is composed and harmonized with emotions of milder sorrow; we are calmed into resignation, elevated with pious hope, and dismissed glowing with the conscious triumphs of virtue.¹⁴⁷

Barbauld's poetic turn of phrase is a useful tool in her argument for the novels' length, as she circuitously asks her readers to organise their minds in order to accommodate it. Barbauld provides them with the apparatus to do this, promising them just rewards.

¹⁴⁵ Barbauld, I, p. lxxxiii.

¹⁴⁶ Barbauld, I, p. lxxxiii.

¹⁴⁷ Barbauld, I, pp. lxxxiii-lxxxiv.

Barbauld moves on to a quick introduction to some of the characters in *Clarissa*.¹⁴⁸ Her inclusion of this is vital to the structure of her biography because ultimately she is trying to seduce her reader into accepting Richardson as a great novelist, and familiarity with the characters could aid in her crusade. It is important to Barbauld that her reader understands certain aspects of Richardson's novel; most importantly that Clarissa's main motivation is always duty.¹⁴⁹ Barbauld stresses that it is imperative for any reader to remember that Clarissa is 'betrayed' by Lovelace and 'not persuaded' by him.¹⁵⁰ On this point Barbauld is implicit.

Taking on her role as literary critic, Barbauld embarks upon an extensive assessment of the novel which, if discussed in its entirety, would be superfluous to this thesis.¹⁵¹ Suffice to say that her appraisal of *Clarissa* is surprisingly unbiased, offering derogatory points at times, and at others resplendently extolling Richardson's work.

Barbauld's opinion of Richardson's heroine, Clarissa Harlowe, differs to that of his male protagonist as she epitomises female virtue. For Barbauld, 'Clarissa comes up to all the ideas we can form of female loveliness and dignified suffering.'¹⁵² Barbauld is proud to applaud Richardson's characterization of her, and she draws her readers' attention to an example of the complexities and injustices within Richardson's narrative:

The first scenes with her hard-hearted family, shew the severe struggles she had with herself, before she could withdraw her obedience from her parents. The measure of that obedience, in Richardson's mind, was very high; and, therefore, Clarissa seems all along, rather to lament the cruelty, than to resent the injustice, of imposing a husband upon her without her own consent. It is easy to see she would have thought it her duty to comply, if he [Roger Solmes] had not been quite so disagreeable.¹⁵³

Richardson's *mélanges* of intentions are fully understood and appreciated by Barbauld, who determines to communicate her conclusions to her reader. For her

¹⁴⁸ See Barbauld, I, pp. lxxxiv-xci.

¹⁴⁹ Barbauld, I, pp. lxxxv-lxxxvi.

¹⁵⁰ Barbauld, I, pp. lxxxv-lxxxvi.

¹⁵¹ See Barbauld, I, pp. lxxxv-xcix.

¹⁵² Barbauld, I, p. xci.

¹⁵³ Barbauld, I, p. xci.

Richardson's execution of the Harlowe family scenes, where filial obedience and the oft-absurdity of duty are paramount, are counter-pointed by Clarissa's own awareness of compromise, self-knowledge and personal instinct. Clarissa reaches a point where she realises that just compromise is greatly outweighed by family honour and rank.

Barbauld's section by section appraisal of the novel is concise but detailed. She selects areas of the novel that interest her, and trusts that these will be of interest to her reader. Her selections are canny, highlighting crucial aspects of the novel, and presenting her reader with the apposite amount of information and direction. To all intents and purposes Barbauld's introduction to Richardson's *Correspondence* is as much a handbook for his novels as it is a biography. This instruction book approach is ingenious because, not only does it mirror what Richardson set out to do with his novels, but again it helps to draw in Barbauld's reader. Her approach is to address the more serious aspects of the novel, but break up its sections of tedium by exposing areas that are lighter and less sensitive. Again she takes her lead from Richardson, who offers 'the wit of Lovelace, and the sprightliness of Miss Howe, [in order to] prevent monotony.'¹⁵⁴ With an apparent awareness of good marketing, Barbauld also offers a taste of the excitement of the novel:

In one instance, however, Clarissa certainly sins against the delicacy of her character, that is, in allowing herself to be made a show of to the loose companions of Lovelace: - But, how does her character rise, when we come to the more distressful scenes; the view of her horror, when, deluded by the pretended relations, she re-enters the fatal house, her temporary insanity after the outrage, in which she so affectingly holds up to Lovelace the licence he had procured, and her dignified behaviour when she first sees her ravisher, after the perpetration of his crime. What finer subject could be presented to the painter, than that in which Clarissa grasps the pen-knife in her hand, her eyes lifted up to heaven, the whites of them only visible, ready to plunge it in her breast, to preserve herself from further outrage [...] Or, the prison scene where she is represented kneeling amidst gloom and horror [...] or, the scene of calmer, but heart-piercing sorrow, in the interview Colonel Morden has with her in her dying moments [...] What admiration, what

¹⁵⁴ Barbauld, I, p. xciii.

reverence does the author inspire us with for the innocent sufferer,
the sufferings too of such a peculiar nature.¹⁵⁵

Barbauld selects a piece so steeped in dramatic effect as to render her reader spell-bound. The piece has everything from sin and horror, to dignity and compassion, via insanity and suggestions of suicide. The crowning glory is of course to 'admiration' of Richardson.¹⁵⁶

Barbauld chooses not to spend a lot of time on the negative aspects of Richardson's work, and given her editorial position, it is hardly surprising. However, she insinuates problems and very occasionally approaches them head on, but never for long. Instead, she would rather spend time focussing on the charm of his works. Barbauld discusses Clarissa's ability to rise above the ultimate outrage of rape, and she attempts to relay the difficulties involved for an author who chooses to write scenes of such a delicate nature. Barbauld states that when Richardson chose to write about the violence of rape, he had to 'overcome all circumstances of dishonour and disgrace, and to throw splendour round the *violated virgin*, more radiant than she possessed in her first bloom.'¹⁵⁷ His challenge was made all the more difficult because, according to Barbauld, 'There is something in virgin purity, to which the imagination willingly plays homage. In all ages, something saintly has been attached to the idea of unblemished chastity.'¹⁵⁸ The point that Barbauld seems determined to make is that Richardson was obviously well equipped to undertake such a subject, and Barbauld concludes her discussion of this by claiming that, despite the tragic absence of physical chastity, 'He has drawn the triumph of mental chastity; he has drawn it uncontaminated, untarnished, and incapable of mingling with pollution.'¹⁵⁹ Both subject and reader are in safe hands, and Richardson, once again, is proven to be a skilled commander of the pen.

¹⁵⁵ Barbauld, I, pp. xciii-xcv. The renowned painter Joseph Highmore (1692-1780) was a close friend of Richardson (Highmore's daughter, Susanna, was a regular house guest and correspondent of Richardson's), and had previously painted twelve prints of *Pamela* (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 189). Eaves and Kimpel state that Highmore's painting of *Clarissa* 'must have been done before April 1748, when Richardson published the third volume of his novel, which contains reference to it, a sort of polite compliment to Highmore' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 189).

¹⁵⁶ Barbauld, I, p. xcv.

¹⁵⁷ Barbauld, I, p. xcvi.

¹⁵⁸ Barbauld, I, p. xcv.

¹⁵⁹ Barbauld, I, p. xcvi.

It is important to Barbauld that she includes a passage about Clarissa's death as Richardson seems to have 'loved to draw death-beds: He seems to have imbibed, from his friend Dr. Young, an opinion of their being a touch-stone of merit or demerit.'¹⁶⁰ For Barbauld, both Clarissa's death scene and the passages that follow it are at once cathartic and informative:

They run into considerable length, but we have been so deeply interested, that we feel it a relief to have our grief drawn off, as it were, by a variety of sluices, and we are glad not to be dismissed till we have shed tears, even to satiety. We enjoy, besides, the punishment of the Harlowes, in the contemplation of their merited anguish. Sentiments of piety pervade the whole work; but the death-bed of Clarissa, her Christian forgiveness, and her meek resignation, are particularly edifying.¹⁶¹

Barbauld negotiates her interchangeable roles of literary editor and recreational reader, to suit the required situation, and the above quote shows Barbauld's deft employment of both.

According to Barbauld there is more to Richardson's novel than initially meets the eye, and she hints at this to her reader. By beginning a discussion about the possible morals of the story Barbauld suggests that the novel is layered with possibilities:

That Clarissa is a highly moral work, has been always allowed; but what is the moral? Is it that a young lady who places her affections upon a libertine, will be deceived and ruined [...] Is she, then, exhibited as a rare pattern of chastity? Surely this is an idea very degrading to the sex. [...] Was it likely that she, who had shewn that her affections were so much under her command, while the object of his addresses appeared to be honourable marriage, should not guard against every freedom with the most cautious vigilance, as soon as she experienced a behaviour in him, which must at once destroy her esteem for him, and be offensive to her just pride, as well as to her modesty?¹⁶²

Barbauld offers her reader a series of questions to consider, but also provides her own answers. She draws their attention to the novels' numerous possibilities, and in doing this she provides an arena for debate. Barbauld is encouraging her

¹⁶⁰ Barbauld, I, p. xcvi.

¹⁶¹ Barbauld, I, p. xcvi.

¹⁶² Barbauld, I, pp. xcix-ci.

reader to engage in a discussion with her in the hope that it might induce the nineteenth century audience to engage with Richardson once again. Amid her discussion she claims that Lovelace openly puts Clarissa's virtue on trial, where he expects it to fail, but Barbauld is quick to assert that 'surely, the virtue of Clarissa could never have been in the smallest danger.'¹⁶³ By the end of the discussion Barbauld is content with her discovery that:

the real moral of Clarissa is, that virtue is triumphant in every situation; that in circumstances the most painful and degrading, in a prison, in a brothel, in grief, in distraction, in despair, it is still lovely, still commanding, still the object of our veneration, of our fondest affections.¹⁶⁴

Barbauld's discussion on the virtues of virtue does not end there, and she congratulates Richardson by claiming that he, and any other novelist who successfully attempts such a feat, 'has performed his office well'.¹⁶⁵ Barbauld is now clear that 'it is immaterial what particular maxim is selected under the name of a moral', stating that if the reader's 'feelings are in favour of virtue, the novel is virtuous; if of vice, the novel is vicious.'¹⁶⁶ After having constructed a solid, but at times flaky, argument for and against Clarissa, Barbauld returns the debate to her reader so that they can decide for themselves.

Barbauld's work momentarily moves back to the subject of death before moving on to discuss some criticisms that have been directed at Richardson. Barbauld reports that Richardson 'has been blamed [...] for encouraging superstition, in representing Clarissa so greatly terrified at the curse laid upon her by her unnatural father.'¹⁶⁷ Barbauld attests that Richardson may be guilty of taking the story in this direction, but pardons him by claiming that 'he may be faulty as a moralist, but it has a good dramatic effect.'¹⁶⁸ Barbauld is happy to criticise her subject, but is then quick to applaud him by offering an alternative to the criticism. This clever tactic employed by Barbauld makes her critique sound as if she is being fair, garnering further trust from her reader.

¹⁶³ Barbauld, I, p. c.

¹⁶⁴ Barbauld, I, pp. ci-cii.

¹⁶⁵ Barbauld, I, p. cii.

¹⁶⁶ Barbauld, I, p. cii.

¹⁶⁷ Barbauld, I, p. ciii.

¹⁶⁸ Barbauld, I, p. ciii.

Barbauld discusses another criticism of Richardson, this time the claims are that he contradicts his original intent in the novel by ‘inflam[ing] passions which it was the author’s professed claim to regulate’, before moving on to defend her subject by highlighting aspects of these supposed problems.¹⁶⁹ At the end of this section Barbauld again resorts to type by adding a relatively unrelated few sentences that can only be there to bolster Richardson’s reputation. According to Barbauld ‘Garrick told him [Richardson] he should with great pleasure be the Lovelace’ should Richardson consider ‘bringing the story of *Clarissa* upon the stage’.¹⁷⁰ To have the eminent actor David Garrick offering to play Lovelace would have been a great accolade for Richardson, however, Barbauld is of the opinion that ‘the gaiety and spirit of Lovelace, in the hands of Garrick, would have been too strong for the morality of the piece.’¹⁷¹ Not only does Barbauld deliver the popularity of Richardson’s novel to her reader through the voice of Garrick, but she then determines that this esteemed honour would not have been quite good enough for the great Richardson.

It is at this point that Barbauld begins to bring her section on *Clarissa* to a close, but not before a relatively short discussion which involves citing, in relation to Richardson, such heavy-weight names as Rousseau, Diderot and Johnson. Once again Barbauld is aligning her subject alongside them in order to prove his worth and standing amongst the greats in literature:

The publication of *Pamela* occasioned the sensation of surprise and pleasure, which a new author, a new style, a new mode of writing, is calculated to inspire; that of *Clarissa* raised its author at once to the first rank among novelists; it is even more admired by foreigners than by the English themselves. Rousseau, whose *Heloise* alone, perhaps, can divide the palm with *Clarissa*, asserts in a letter to d’Alembert, that nothing was ever written equal to, or approaching it, in any language. Diderot speaks of Richardson with high applause. Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Rowe*, expresses himself in the following forcible language:

“The character of Lothario seems to have been expanded by Richardson into that of Lovelace; but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. Lothario, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator’s kindness. It was in the power of

¹⁶⁹ Barbauld, I, pp. ciii-cvi.

¹⁷⁰ Barbauld, I, p. cvii.

¹⁷¹ Barbauld, I, p. cvii.

Richardson alone, to teach us at once esteem and detestation; to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, and elegance, and courage, naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain.”¹⁷²

Barbauld is also keen to introduce Richardson’s success abroad, and while she cites Johnson’s praise of Richardson, she also offers her reader the possibility of exploring continental writers. Barbauld wants to show Richardson as a versatile writer who was discussed and appreciated abroad. However, as Thomas O. Beebee discusses in his work *Clarissa on the Continent: Translation and Seduction*, the translation process was not quite as simple as one might expect: ‘Curiously, the moral and political importance of Richardson’s novel made its translation all the more difficult.’¹⁷³ Beebee also discusses why he chose to work on *Clarissa* rather than any other novel, and in doing so he discusses the enduring importance of the novel, while perhaps inadvertently aiding Barbauld in her support of Richardson as an important writer:

Once the decision to study a novel was made, Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* immediately presented itself as one of the most international of literary texts. Its prompt simultaneous translation into German and French provided an interesting chance for comparison not just of translation with original, but of two translations, in different languages, with each other. Prevost and Michaelis did their translations of Richardson at approximately the same time, but for different purposes within different environments. [...] But *Clarissa’s* advantages do not end there; the book’s continued popularity and repeated translations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries provided the opportunity for diachronic comparisons as well. Surely few works of prose fiction have held the distinction of such a wide range of influences, or of so many translations done over such a long period of time.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Barbauld, I, pp. cvii-cviii.

¹⁷³ Thomas O. Beebee, *Clarissa on the Continent: Translation and Seduction* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. ix. Beebee rightly claims that not only did the language of the novel require translation, but also ‘entire social attitudes toward property, prudery, religion, and gender difference.’ (Beebee, p. ix).

¹⁷⁴ Beebee, p. viii. L’Abbé Antoine Francois Prevost’s French translation of *Clarissa* appeared in twelve volumes in 1751 (Beebee, p. 207). Johann David Michaelis’s eight volume German translation of the novel began in 1749 and was finished by 1753 (Beebee, p. 207). According to Beebee Prevost’s work also secured ‘Richardson’s popularity in Russia, where French translations were commonly used (Beebee, p. 3). Toward the end of her work on the novel Barbauld further discusses the translations of *Clarissa* (see Barbauld, I, p. cxiii).

Beebee clearly considers Richardson and his novel to be contemporaneous successes, both in England and abroad, and his reference to the rapidity with which the translations appeared suggests a popular need for them. Beebee brings Richardson into the twentieth century – via the nineteenth – by recognising *Clarissa* as a conduit for language development, thus making the novel, and its author, enduring pieces of literary history.

As if to further confirm the popularity and success of *Clarissa* and its author, Barbauld includes a passage claiming that some locations found within the novel were also celebrated. She reports of ‘a Frenchman who paid a visit to Hampstead, for the sole purpose of finding out the house in the *flask-walk* where *Clarissa* lodged’.¹⁷⁵ Barbauld is keen to reiterate the excitement that surrounded the publication of *Clarissa* by claiming that it was increased because the reader had to wait for several months for each new publication.¹⁷⁶ According to Barbauld, the waiting-game incurred such hysteria that when the final four volumes were published, and the plot revealed, Richardson received threats. One such threat came from ‘One who signs Philaretus’ who claims that on discovering Richardson’s intentions she is “‘determined to read no more; I should read the account of her death with as much anguish of mind as I should feel at the loss of my dearest friend.’”¹⁷⁷ Barbauld tells us that Richardson knew that if he had changed the ending to *Clarissa* then it would have compromised the entire work, and she is eager to point out that ‘he could not but have been secretly flattered with seeing the strong impression he had made.’¹⁷⁸ Barbauld cites a typically obsequious passage from a letter sent to Richardson by Susanna Highmore:

“What must have been your feelings, at the time you wrote what nobody can read without streaming eyes and heart-breaking sorrow? It has had the same effect on my father and mother as on myself. We could none of us read aloud the affecting scenes we met with, but each read to ourselves, and in separate apartments wept.” Miss Highmore was not mistaken in her idea of the feelings the author must have had in writing his work. He bore testimony to the maxim *si vis me flere dolendum est primum ipsi tibi*, for, he says, in one of his letters, that *Clarissa* has cost him as many tears

¹⁷⁵ Barbauld, I, p. cix.

¹⁷⁶ Barbauld, I, pp. cix-cx.

¹⁷⁷ Barbauld, I, p. cx.

¹⁷⁸ Barbauld, I, p. cxi.

as his readers. A number of correspondencies were the consequence of his celebrity; but, certainly the most singular compliment he ever received, was from a lady who had herself written a novel, and signs Cleomira: she says, "I am more and more charmed with your *Clarissa*; it is, indeed, a noble character; but, I fear, no where to be met with except in your letters. What a pity it is you are not a woman, and blest with means of shining as she did; for, a person capable of drawing such a character, would certainly be able to act in the same manner, if in a like situation."¹⁷⁹

In much the same way as Barbauld uses the translations of *Clarissa* to illustrate Richardson's popularity and importance abroad, she uses Highmore's letter to further consolidate his reputation and celebrity at home. According to Highmore, Richardson's writing skills had rendered men and women, young and old, speechless, and incapable of shared participation.

Fame Consolidated: *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*

Our author was now at the zenith of his fame, but his fancy was not exhausted, nor his powers of writing diminished; and, after an interval of between four and five years, he again appeared before the public.¹⁸⁰

Richardson had experienced great success with *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, both novels having strong female lead characters. Barbauld's introduction to Richardson's third and final novel clearly states the aim of the novelist; for his third production Richardson 'determined to give the world an example of a *perfect man*.'¹⁸¹ Barbauld's claim is that Richardson wanted the opportunity to write every possible male virtue thus creating a complete character:

His laudable design was to unite ever thing that is graceful and engaging in the man of spirit and the fine gentleman, with every moral virtue, and with the observance of the strict rules of Christianity – an arduous undertaking!¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Barbauld, I, pp. cxi-cxii.

¹⁸⁰ Barbauld, I, p. cxiii.

¹⁸¹ Barbauld, I, p. cxiii.

¹⁸² Barbauld, I, pp. cxiii-cxiv.

Barbauld opens her discussion in praise of Richardson's idea, and lets her reader know that the task was by no means an easy one. Richardson had, again, set himself a difficult challenge which Barbauld is eager to share with her audience, showing Richardson as a man who does not shy away from a demanding task. According to Barbauld, Richardson was further stimulated to write *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) because he had been harangued by many of his 'female disciples.'¹⁸³ Richardson had become concerned when he had heard that his earlier creation, Robert Lovelace, had proved popular with his female readers so, amid claims that 'he had given them nobody else to like', Richardson set to work on *The Good Man*.¹⁸⁴

After her initial introduction to *Sir Charles Grandison*, Barbauld, for the most part, adopts the same structure that she uses when analyzing *Pamela* and *Clarissa*: a brief synopsis of the story and its main characters. It differs only in the amount of negative criticism that Barbauld includes.

Barbauld begins with a description of Sir Charles that bears a canny resemblance to her subject or, at the very least, a replica of a character that Richardson would like to have been:

Sir Charles is a man of birth and fortune, endowed with every personal advantage, and master of every fashionable accomplishment. He is placed in a variety of situations, calculated to draw forth the virtues and energies of his character, as a son, a brother, a guardian, a friend, and a lover; and he conduct is every where exemplary. He is a man of address, of knowledge of the world, and makes himself to be respected in different countries, and by all sorts of people, bad as well as good. He is generous without profusion; religious without superstition; complaisant without weakness; firm in his purposes, rapid in the execution of them; jealous of his honour, yet always open to a generous reconciliation, feeling (at least as the author would have us believe) the passions of human nature, yet always possessing a perfect command over them.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Barbauld, I, p. cxiv.

¹⁸⁴ Barbauld, I, p. cxiv. Barbauld states that this was the original title for *Sir Charles Grandison*, and the title by which Richardson always referred to it whilst writing it.

¹⁸⁵ Barbauld, I, p. cxv.

The first half of this quote positions Sir Charles in the mind of the reader, Barbauld ensures that they know exactly who Richardson's hero is and where he comes from. The paratactic listing used by Barbauld in the second half of the quote is an effective tool designed to gather momentum and induce excitement for the character and his narrative. Here we also see Barbauld describe Sir Charles as having 'knowledge of the world', something that Richardson had little experience of.¹⁸⁶

Barbauld informs her reader that in *Sir Charles Grandison* Richardson alters his plot design, by moving his central character around more. Sir Charles is positioned in different locations where he is expected to adapt to any situation that he finds himself in. Richardson makes his hero the focal point of the novel, and he is in virtually every scene other than a few at the beginning of the novel. Barbauld is quick to describe Sir Charles's entrance into the novel:

Of him the author never loses sight after his first appearance, which he makes as soon as the reader has been prepared by the play of some inferior characters, (who, to use a military phrase, *keep the ground* for him) in a brilliant action, the rescuing of the lady, he is finally to marry, from the hands of a lawless ravisher.¹⁸⁷

Not only does it appear that Richardson has in some way corrected the much criticized indecency in his last novel (Clarissa's rape) – by having his new hero save his new heroine – but Barbauld is also informing her reader that Richardson has developed as a writer and is confident about attempting something new.

Barbauld's narrative continues with a brief outline of the novel where she introduces her reader to some of the characters and their backgrounds. Barbauld appreciates Richardson's characterisations calling them 'admirably executed and

¹⁸⁶ Barbauld, I, p. cxv. Eaves and Kimpel tell us that there is no evidence to suggest that Richardson ever left England, that 'He was primarily a city man, with a city man's enjoyment of his rural retreat in a convenient suburb. His residence as a boy in Derbyshire must have been brief and left no traces' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 527). He made a few trips to Bath (largely to visit a physician about his health), but that seems to be about the extent of the distance he chose to travel (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 155). There is a trip to Bath recorded in 1753, and on the same trip he stopped off in Cheltenham, Oxford and Cuddesdon, (Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 323-325). On occasion he visited friends in Enfield, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Tunbridge, Surrey, Welwyn, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and leading up to Aaron Hill's death, early in 1750, Richardson had been to visit him a few times in Plaistow (Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 323-325). Richardson, even though it had been discussed many times, never got as far as Lancashire to visit Lady Bradshaigh (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 516).

¹⁸⁷ Barbauld, I, p. cxvi.

highly moral', and she draws our attention to his continued insistence upon filial respect by claiming that Grandison's behaviour toward his family 'is all excellent, and opens his character to the greatest advantage.'¹⁸⁸

Barbauld's greatest intrigue is the love triangle between Sir Charles, Harriet Byron and Clementina della Porretta, but she is acutely aware of the criticism it attracts and includes an observation made by cynics of the novel: 'A double love, [...] in that passion, is no love at all; and they will insist upon it, that Sir Charles is all along actuated by compassion solely for both the ladies'.¹⁸⁹ It is curious that instead of omitting this commentary Barbauld allows it to remain, as it tends to damage the lead character, and compromise the novelist's message: the importance of moral principles.

When discussing various characters Barbauld recognises that Richardson uses one character to set up another. For example, Barbauld claims that when Richardson writes Harriet Byron's character she 'is judiciously kept down' in order to make her rival, Clementina, appear even more 'high-wrought'.¹⁹⁰ Barbauld is suggesting that because of Richardson's perspicacious knowledge of narrative structure, the reader engages with Harriet Byron immediately, and only ever sees Clementina and her family as a problem. Richardson has constructed his narrative and its characters so effectively that a distance appears between the reader and the Porretta family, and they are left feeling 'glad, upon the whole, when Sir Charles is disengaged from them.'¹⁹¹ In a passionate flash of idealistic prose, Barbauld points out that 'We adore Clementina, but we come *home* to Miss Byron.'¹⁹²

Barbauld has to defend Richardson and his latest novel more than either of his previous ones and, indeed, this seems to be an important part of her account.¹⁹³ At times Barbauld even seems to enjoy contributing to the criticism, and does so with relative frequency. However, no matter what side Barbauld is on at any given moment, she is utterly compelling, for example when she warns any reader who is incapable of feeling:

¹⁸⁸ Barbauld, I, p. cxvii.

¹⁸⁹ Barbauld, I, p. cxvii.

¹⁹⁰ Barbauld, I, pp. cxvii-cxviii.

¹⁹¹ Barbauld, I, p. cxviii.

¹⁹² Barbauld, I, p. cxviii.

¹⁹³ See Barbauld, I, pp. cxviii-cxxi.

It were superfluous to any one who has perused this work, to remark the masterly manner in which the madness of Clementina is painted. Dr. Warton speaks thus of it:

“I know not whether even the madness of King Lear is wrought up and expressed by so many little strokes of nature and passion. It is absolutely pedantry to prefer and compare the madness of Orestes, in Euripides, to this of Clementina.” There is such a tenderness and innocence in her wanderings, such affecting starts of passion, such a significant woe in her looks and attitudes, such a sanctity of mind, with so much passion that he who is not moved with it, must resign the pretension of being accessible to fictitious sorrow.¹⁹⁴

Barbauld employs someone else – Joseph Warton – to help in her argument, who subsequently turns to Shakespeare and Euripides for support.¹⁹⁵ Again we see Barbauld aligning Richardson with iconic writers. But Barbauld is not without her own criticism of Richardson as she informs her reader that ‘It is a fault of [his] that he never knew when to have done with a character’.¹⁹⁶ For Barbauld, Richardson often over-embellishes, which results in the weakening of his story. She offers some examples of where Richardson could have saved himself from unnecessary criticism if only his ‘desire of making his piece instructive had not, in this instance, warped his judgement, and restrained his genius’.¹⁹⁷ Barbauld further investigates the characters of Clementina and Harriet Byron, and entwines her postulations with Richardson’s concerns over the influence that his novels have over impressionable young minds.¹⁹⁸

Barbauld’s appraisal of *Sir Charles Grandison* progresses toward further criticisms of it, but not before she seizes the opportunity to celebrate Richardson’s abilities further:

There is not, in any of Richardson’s works, one of those detached episodes, thrown in like make-weights, to increase the bulk of the volume, which are so common in other works: such is the story of *The Man of the Hill*, in Tom Jones. If his works are laboured into length, at least his prolixity is all bestowed upon the subject, and increases the effect of the story. Flashes of humour, and transient

¹⁹⁴ Barbauld, I, p. cxxi.

¹⁹⁵ Dr. Joseph Warton, the eminent academic and literary critic.

¹⁹⁶ Barbauld, I, p. cxxi.

¹⁹⁷ Barbauld, I, p. cxxii.

¹⁹⁸ See Barbauld, I, pp. cxxii-cxxiii.

touches of sensibility, shew, indeed, genius; but patient and persevering labour alone can finish a plan, and make every part bear properly upon the main subject.¹⁹⁹

By and large, Barbauld negatively implicates another author in order to glorify her own, but she also recognises Fielding's touches of brilliance. Barbauld cannot resist resurrecting the Richardson-Fielding feud with a passive-aggressive nudge at Fielding. In her later selection Barbauld has chosen to include numerous letters which pessimistically refer to Fielding.

Barbauld's biography observes that *The History of Sir Grandison* is overtly susceptible to criticism, but she puts the problem into perspective by claiming that all works are. According to Barbauld, Richardson was 'perplexed' at the prospect of having to represent Sir Charles as a 'finished gentleman' of courage, who does not engage in any kind of combat.²⁰⁰ Richardson, despite his moral opposition to it, had included duelling in *Clarissa*, and he had no intention of compromising his principles again.²⁰¹ In order to resolve the issue and 'exhibit his [Sir Charles] spirit and courage', Richardson realised that 'it was necessary to bring them into action by adventures and rencounters.'²⁰² Sir Charles became a proficient swordsman, who never harms his opponent, and is never harmed himself. For Barbauld, Richardson's decision is problematic. By using Edward Young's celebratory epigram to Richardson's non-combative scenes Barbauld continues with her critical analysis of the novel:

[Young:] What hast thou done? I'm ravished at the scene;
A sword undrawn, makes mighty Caesars mean.

[Barbauld:] But, in fact, it was not undrawn. In the affair with Sir Hargrave, he may be said to have really fought a dual; for, though he refuses the challenge in words, he virtually accepts it, by going into the garden with him, knowing his purpose. In like manner he with Greville retires to a private spot, and there, on his adversary's drawing, which he might be sure he would do, draws, disarms, and

¹⁹⁹ Barbauld, I, p. cxxvi.

²⁰⁰ Barbauld, I, p. cxxvii.

²⁰¹ Barbauld discusses Richardson's aversion to duelling earlier in the biography (see Barbauld, I, p. xcvi). He was embarrassed that he had compromised his own morals by including such scenes in *Clarissa*.

²⁰² Barbauld, I, p. cxxvii.

gives him his life. But Greville might not have given him his, nor could every one turn a duel into such harmless play.²⁰³

As far as Barbauld is concerned this is a blatant contradiction, and she argues a case against Sir Charles's innocence. For Barbauld it is about an awareness of intent, and she offers an example of when this occurs.

Barbauld acknowledges 'a certain stiffness' in the characterisation of Sir Charles, and admits that this is partly due to Richardson's style which, as she had mentioned earlier when comparing Richardson to Fielding in her discussion of *Pamela*, has elegance a-plenty but lacks ease.²⁰⁴ Perhaps Barbauld's most judicious observation is that stiffness comes with perfection. Her claim is that it 'arises from the very circumstance of his being so perfect and so successful. Perfection of character, joined to distress, will interest; but prosperous perfection does not greatly engage our sympathy.'²⁰⁵ Barbauld's diplomatic evaluation of Richardson's protagonist tells us that she is far from impressed with some of his choices. As her narrative moves on Barbauld questions Richardson's 'high notions [...] of parental authority' as Sir Charles enters into wedlock without considering or consulting his father, and she suggests that this oversight can only be explained in terms of it 'embarrass[ing] the story.'²⁰⁶

The concluding pages of Barbauld's discussion of *Sir Charles Grandison* state that 'in his letters' Richardson was asked 'by many of his friends' to write another volume for the work.²⁰⁷ Barbauld stipulates that not only did many of his correspondents want a continuation from him, but also his translators in Gottenburg, who had thought the work was incomplete. For Barbauld, however, *Sir Charles Grandison* would benefit greatly from editing, and she goes so far as to say that it 'would be improved by merely striking out the last volume, and, indeed, a good part of the sixth'.²⁰⁸

Obviously Barbauld is not a great fan of Richardson's final novel as she spends most of her discussion of it contributing to previously established critiques. Her assessment of *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* oscillates between attempting

²⁰³ Barbauld, I, p. cxxviii.

²⁰⁴ Barbauld, I, p. cxxix.

²⁰⁵ Barbauld, I, p. cxxix.

²⁰⁶ Barbauld, I, p. cxxx.

²⁰⁷ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxii.

²⁰⁸ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxiii.

to defend it, and eagerly reproaching it. But Barbauld concludes her discussion of it with a sharp reminder to herself that ‘it is ungrateful to dwell on the faults of genius.’²⁰⁹

Selected other publications

Having presented thorough discussions on all three of Richardson’s novels, Barbauld introduces some of his other publications: ‘*Familiar Letters; A paper in the Rambler; An edition of Aesop’s Fables, with Reflections;* and he was concerned in a few booksellers publications.’²¹⁰ *Familiar Letters* had been put to one side once *Pamela* had begun, but Richardson resumed work on it immediately after *Pamela*’s publication. Barbauld also informs us that Richardson, as with *Pamela*, had refused to put his name to his collection of letters, but its popularity was undisputable:

It is seldom found any where but in the servant’s drawer, where it is a favourite book, but when so found, it has not unfrequently detained the eye of the mistress, wondering all the while by what secret charm she was induced to turn over a book, apparently too low for her perusal; and that charm was – Richardson.²¹¹

For Barbauld *Familiar Letters* epitomises everything that Richardson has set out to impart: the importance of duty, his own responsibility to the accurate description of it, and making it accessible to those whose need was greatest. Again a familiar pattern emerges as this section is only really about extolling the virtues of Barbauld’s subject. Barbauld’s research has led her to believe Richardson’s authorial contribution – number ninety-five – to the *Rambler* was the most popular and most in demand.²¹² We are told the essence of the piece, but Barbauld refrains from going any further, instead, she elects to mention Richardson’s friendship with Samuel Johnson and their relationship to the paper.²¹³

²⁰⁹ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxiii.

²¹⁰ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxiii.

²¹¹ Barbauld, I, pp. cxxxiii-cxxxiv.

²¹² Barbauld, I, p. cxxxiv.

²¹³ According to Barbauld, Richardson’s work for the *Rambler* was concerned with ‘the progress of a virtuous courtship.’ (Barbauld, I, p. cxxxiv.)

Barbauld tells us that Richardson was also responsible for ‘a large single sheet of the Duties of Wives to Husbands, and a Selection of Maxims and Moral Sentiments, extracted from his three novels’, and she also claims that morality in Richardson’s works was of primary importance, more so, than his ability to invent.²¹⁴ Barbauld goes on to say that Richardson liked to think of himself as ‘the great reformer of the age’, a position that was bestowed upon him by flattering fans.²¹⁵ He chose to believe it and accepted their tribute willingly. Barbauld asserts that:

it was a vain expectation that his [Maxims and Moral Sentiments] should attract attention, when they were abstracted from all that had rendered them impressive. Yet he certainly did seem to expect, that this little volume would be used by his admirers as a kind of manual of morality.²¹⁶

Despite Barbauld’s continual attempts to strengthen Richardson’s status within the realms of literary history she shows little patience when his own ego takes over. Here we see Barbauld curtail him. Barbauld unequivocally believes in Richardson’s genius and unreservedly celebrates it, but she is also a realist and steps in to prevent his ego from running away with him. Barbauld identifies that whilst he is ‘an excellent moral writer’, he does not own the ability to write about ‘terseness or dignity’, and it is these qualities that are required of an inspired writer of ‘moral maxims and observations’; the implication being that he could personally learn something from understanding this.²¹⁷

At times Barbauld discloses her prowess as an impressive Romantic poet, and also as a formidable literary critic. Her job here is to promote Richardson in order to sell Phillips’s edition, and she does so, with her own reputation still intact. Barbauld is very aware of Richardson’s shortcomings, and candidly includes them all in her work. But her talent lies in her ability to account for his failings and focus on his talents, illuminating them so magnificently that everything else fades into oblivion. Barbauld happily offers an honest, and at times scathing, appraisal

²¹⁴ Barbauld, I, pp. cxxxiv-cxxxv.

²¹⁵ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxv.

²¹⁶ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxv.

²¹⁷ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxv.

of Richardson and his works, but always follows it with a laudable account of his talent.

When discussing Richardson's writing style, Barbauld is pragmatic. She commends him for his 'facility; expressions, as well as thoughts, flowing readily to his pen', but is quick to observe that he lacks 'either the ease and elegance of good company, or the polished period of a finished author.'²¹⁸ So Barbauld's unrelenting reference to Richardson as a genius has to mean his core ability, and it is this genius that requires crafting in order to become the polished and complete product. Barbauld thinks that the flattery which surrounds all of Richardson's work is problematic, and she states that 'they are blemished with little flippancies of expression, new coined words, and sentences involved and ill-constructed.'²¹⁹ In balancing the positive comments with the negative Barbauld ensures that she does not compromise her own literary reputation, and she substantiates her reasoning by citing a passage from a letter from one of Richardson's correspondents, John Read:

“But is there not here and there a nursery phrase, an ill-invented uncouth compound; a parenthesis, which interrupts, not assists, the sense? If I am wrong, impute it to the rudeness of a college-man, who has had too little commerce with the world, to be a judge of its language.”²²⁰

Barbauld continues to critique Richardson's style by comparing it to that 'of a Dutch painter, with the fine ideas of an Italian one.'²²¹ For Barbauld Richardson's descriptive prowess is second to none, and as with the painters, the audience gets to see exactly what he wants them to see. Her claim is that this is due to Richardson's willingness to write in such detail, to recognise the importance of minutiae. She further asserts that had Richardson chosen to focus his attention on

²¹⁸ Barbauld, I, pp. cxxxv-cxxxvi.

²¹⁹ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxvi.

²²⁰ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxvi. John Read became a correspondent of Richardson's around the time of the publication of *Clarissa*; he was an academic of Kings College, Cambridge (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 285).

²²¹ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxvii.

the workings of rural life, then he would have been as successful a describer as William Cowper.²²²

Barbauld finds a different subject to discuss, an area that will present her with a platform from which to defend her subject further. Rumour had abounded as to the authenticity of Richardson as sole author of his works, particularly *Sir Charles Grandison*, the suggested assistants being some of his female correspondents.²²³ Barbauld defends Richardson's position on this, concurring that he had looked to them for advice about 'fashionable life', because his own knowledge of such things was limited.²²⁴ Barbauld includes a section from a letter to Lady Bradshaigh from Richardson which refutes her involvement in any way. In it he names a different lady who he had accepted a 'trifling insertion' from.²²⁵ Barbauld makes it clear that it was nothing more than 'a mere insertion, and not at all connected with the story of the novel.'²²⁶ Barbauld continues to defend Richardson against the accusations by listing all the possible attributes that point to it being written by one author.²²⁷

Before moving on to the next section of her biography Barbauld presents a two page insight into the Dublin booksellers' piracy scandal of 1753.²²⁸ Richardson had been deeply hurt by the episode which, according to Barbauld, had left him in a state of 'great disgust and vexation', and she ascertains that 'these men [the booksellers] bribed the servants of Richardson to steal the sheets while they were under the press.'²²⁹ Despite his status as a successful and famous author Richardson was in a vulnerable position. On the one hand his servants had proved that their loyalty to an 'assiduous and liberal [...] master' was purchasable, but on the other he was able to take great comfort from the fact that his friends, both in England and Ireland, had rallied round in support of him.²³⁰ Richardson had discovered that success and celebrity came with a price.

²²² Barbauld, I, p. cxxxvii. Cowper was famed for his descriptive rural poetry, such as the extensive *The Task* (1785) and the comic ballad, *John Gilpin* (1782).

²²³ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxix.

²²⁴ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxix.

²²⁵ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxix.

²²⁶ Barbauld, I, p. cxxxix.

²²⁷ See Barbauld, I, pp. cxxxix-cxli.

²²⁸ See Barbauld, I, pp. cxliv-cxlv.

²²⁹ Barbauld, I, pp. cxliv-cxlv.

²³⁰ Barbauld, I, p. xlv. Barbauld, I, p. cxlvi.

Work and Home: Richardson's Later Years

At this point we see Barbauld shed her role as literary critic, and return to the more traditional aspects of biographical writing. Interestingly, Barbauld's method of structuring her work seems to be a mixture of a mode which afforded her the space to be a literary commentator, and a mode in the classical tradition laid down by the early practitioners of life-writing, such as Aristotle and Plutarch. According to France and St Clair 'In the early days of life-writing [...] the aim was to celebrate exemplary existences and offer them as models for imitation'.²³¹

Although the event of the Dublin booksellers had enraged and distressed Richardson, by 1755 Barbauld reports that 'he was engaged in building, both in town and in the country.'²³² Richardson had been active in moving house from North End to Parsons Green, and was purchasing and knocking down numerous 'old houses, eight in number' in order to build a large working premises.²³³ As far as his new home was concerned, Barbauld claims that it 'was neither so large nor so airy as the one he quitted', and it seems that not everyone liked it as much as the previous one, as Richardson complains: "'Every body (he says) is more pleased with what I have done, than my wife.'" ²³⁴

In 1757 Richardson's daughter Mary (Polly) married Philip Ditcher, 'a respectable surgeon at Bath.'²³⁵ Mary was his only daughter to marry in his lifetime, and it appears to have marked a turning point for Richardson. Barbauld claims that from this point on Richardson 'relax[ed] from business' and spent less and less time at his offices in town.²³⁶ Barbauld reflects that now was the time for Richardson to enjoy himself; to take pleasure in his successes, his family and friends, and his wealth 'but, alas! leisure purchased by severe application, often comes too late to be enjoyed', and on the 4th of July 1761 Richardson's nervous disorders 'increased upon him' and he died of 'a stroke of apoplexy'.²³⁷ Barbauld

²³¹ France and St Clair, p. 1.

²³² Barbauld, I, p. cxlvi.

²³³ Barbauld, I, p. cxlvii. Richardson's house at North End was then called 'Selby House' but is generally referred to as 'North End' (Austin Dobson, *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, 2nd series (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1894), pp. 69-70.

²³⁴ Barbauld, I, p. cxlvii.

²³⁵ Barbauld, I, p. cxlvii. See chapter 3 for further information on Mary Richardson's marriage to Philip Ditcher.

²³⁶ Barbauld, I, p. cxlvii.

²³⁷ Barbauld, I, p. cxlviii.

reports that, upon his own request, Richardson was buried ‘near his first wife, in the middle aisle, near the pulpit of St. Bride’s church.’²³⁸

Barbauld’s Conclusion

Even though Barbauld has already stated Richardson’s death, it takes her another forty-two pages to conclude her biography.²³⁹ In these final pages Barbauld is mostly reciting significant events that help to substantiate her earlier claims. For example, she begins by explaining that her preceding account of his life shows the moral fibre of her subject. Barbauld is categorical in her assertion that her biography ‘was most respectable and worthy of his genius’, and she lists adjective after adjective as proof of her claim.²⁴⁰ In the oft-used letter to his Dutch translator, Johannes Stinstra, Richardson claims that “‘I never was in a bad house, nor, to my knowledge, in company with a licentious woman in my life’”, and by using this quote Barbauld is able to declare that her subject had enough strength of character to avoid falling prey to the pitfalls of a man in his position.²⁴¹ However, she then goes on to say that ‘his admirers [...] are constrained to acknowledge, that his imagination was not quite so pure as his conduct.’²⁴² For Barbauld, even though Richardson’s ‘chief intimacies’ were with women she is, occasionally, suspicious of his attitude toward them and points out that while his knowledge of the sex is ‘most formidable’, at times ‘he betrays a mean opinion’ of them.²⁴³

Barbauld paints a picture of Richardson as ‘a careful, kind father, and a good husband in essentials’, but she notices that a trait she disliked in the character of Sir Charles Grandison can also be found in Richardson: ‘a certain formality and stiffness of manner’.²⁴⁴ According to Barbauld, Richardson recognised this in himself and realised that this could have contributed to his daughters being “‘shy little fools.’”²⁴⁵ Later Barbauld includes information from a lady who knew the Richardson family intimately, and this unnamed woman claims that it was

²³⁸ Barbauld, I, p. cxlviii.

²³⁹ Of the two-hundred and twelve page biography, Barbauld’s lengthy conclusion takes up forty-two pages of it.

²⁴⁰ Barbauld, I, pp. cxlviii-cxlix.

²⁴¹ Barbauld, I, p. cxlix.

²⁴² Barbauld, I, pp. cxlix-cl.

²⁴³ Barbauld, I, p. cl.

²⁴⁴ Barbauld, I, pp. cl-cli.

²⁴⁵ Barbauld, I, p. cli.

Richardson's wife who was the formal one.²⁴⁶ Despite Richardson's own acknowledgement of his parental shortcomings, Barbauld reports that with young children, he was 'familiarly kind', and 'generally carried sugar-plums in his pockets to make his court to them.'²⁴⁷ However, the appearance of flourishing moments of 'half captious pleasantry' found in Richardson's letters does not deter Barbauld from claiming that 'I do not feel sure that he was a good-humoured, man.'²⁴⁸

Richardson and Charity: the cyclical nature of gift-giving

Barbauld reveals that Richardson was generously charitable, financially helping both Aaron Hill and one of the Collier sisters.²⁴⁹ On one occasion he 'had the honour to bail Dr. Johnson', and on another he is reported to have offered help to a neighbour that he barely knew, whose home had been involved in a fire.²⁵⁰ Richardson is said to have offered the neighbour, along with his family and their servants, an entire floor in his house for as long as they required it. But Barbauld's deepest joy seems to be in informing her reader that 'the unhappy Mrs. Pilkington found a friend in him.'²⁵¹ Barbauld also includes an episode where his favourite correspondent, Lady Bradshaigh, mentions that she is looking to find a position for 'poor penitent girl' that she knew – Richardson insisted that she 'come to us'.²⁵² Further charitable acts are highlighted as Barbauld informs her reader that Richardson also supported his late brother's family. In fact, whenever there was a disagreement within the family, it was Richardson who resolved it by offering advice that was 'prudent, conciliating, and judicious.'²⁵³ Unsurprisingly, as her biography slowly draws to its close, Barbauld is abounding with praise for

²⁴⁶ Barbauld, I, pp. clii-cliii.

²⁴⁷ Barbauld, I, p. clii.

²⁴⁸ Barbauld, I, p. cliv.

²⁴⁹ Barbauld, I, pp. cliv-clv. Although Barbauld does not mention which Collier sister she means, Eaves and Kimpel tell us that 'Richardson once sent her [Margaret] five guineas to buy a door to her room, to keep off the cold' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 204). Richardson had been friends with both Margaret and Jane Collier since the composition of *Clarissa*. When Jane died – sometime between 1754 and 1755 – Margaret moved to Ryde on the Isle of Wight where she set up home in a cottage belonging to an elderly couple. She and Richardson enjoyed a correspondence during these years (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 203).

²⁵⁰ Barbauld, I, pp. cliv-clv.

²⁵¹ Barbauld, I, pp. cliv-clv. The events of Laetitia Pilkington's life are far too convoluted to include here, but the letters that pass between her and Richardson, unsurprisingly, detail his benevolence and compassion.

²⁵² Barbauld, I, p. clv.

²⁵³ Barbauld, I, p. clvi.

Richardson, noting that ‘His advice and opinion was greatly valued by all his friends, both literary and others’.²⁵⁴ He was enduringly accommodating, inviting sick friends to stay with him, and opening his home to anyone who wished to venture in.²⁵⁵ Richardson enjoyed being ‘the obliger, especially if his friends were of rank and fortune superior to his own’, and he often spoke of having a preference toward giving than receiving.²⁵⁶ Barbauld rightly dissects this and comes to the conclusion that Richardson had an innate fear of inferiority, of having ‘a jealous fear of being treated otherwise than as an equal.’²⁵⁷ She offers an example of this:

When Lady Echlin expressed her wishes that he might be acquainted with her daughter, Mrs. Palmer, a lady of fashion; “the advances, then,” said he, “must come from her. She was the superior in rank, but he knew ladies of the west-end of the town did not wish to pass Temple-bar;” and, sometimes, perhaps, this consciousness made him a little captious with regard to the attentions he expected from ladies of fashion; who, coming to town for a short period, could not devote so much time to him, as perhaps, the warm affection expressed in their correspondence, might have led him to expect.²⁵⁸

Richardson’s compulsive acts of charity can be viewed in terms of gift-giving, and weave through his correspondence in various guises. These charitable gestures can be inextricably linked to his anxieties over status, an argument which will be developed throughout the following chapters. However, an introduction to it here might be helpful.

In his 1922 study *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, the French anthropologist and sociologist Marcel Mauss sought to discover some of the basic underpinnings of modern society. In her 1990 foreword to Mauss’s work, Mary Douglas tells us that: ‘Charity is meant to be a free gift, a voluntary, unrequited surrender of resources’, but she then goes on to

²⁵⁴ Barbauld, I, p. clvi.

²⁵⁵ Barbauld, I, p. clvii.

²⁵⁶ Barbauld, I, p. clvii.

²⁵⁷ Barbauld, I, p. clvii.

²⁵⁸ Barbauld, I, pp. clvii-clviii. See ‘Belfour’ chapter for further information on Lady Echlin.

explain that Mauss discovered that this was not the case.²⁵⁹ Mauss learned, from his observations of various primitive communities, that a complicated gift-giving system (the ‘potlatch’) had been established which involved a cyclical trading tradition (known as *kula*).²⁶⁰ Mauss introduces his reader to the system practiced by communities of the Trobriand Islands:

The first gift of a *vaygu’a* bears the name of *vaga*, ‘opening gift’. It is the starting point, one that irrevocably commits the recipient to make a reciprocating gift, the *yotile* [...] translates as the ‘clinging gift’: the gift that seals the transaction. Another name for this latter gift is *kudu*, the tooth that bites, that really cuts, bites through, and liberates. It is obligatory; it is expected, and it must be equivalent to the first gift [...] If one is not able to reciprocate, at the very least one may offer a *basi*, which merely ‘pierces’ the skin, does not bite, and does not conclude the affair. It is a kind of advance present whose purpose is to delay. It appeases the former donor, now the creditor; but does not free the debtor, the future donor.²⁶¹

As Barbauld has observed, Richardson’s concerns over inferiority, coupled with his almost obsessive benevolence, can only ever lead to a never-ending circle of offerings. Richardson and all of his correspondents enter into their own community of gift-giving, with Richardson and his celebrity status, managing to trounce each one of them every time. As we shall see, in Mauss’s terms, Richardson consistently delivers both the ideal *vaga* and the ideal *kudu* depending upon what he feels is required in any given situation. For example, when constantly making promises or intimations of intended visits to friends, which he invariably breaks, the intimated offer of him alone, is sufficient to assuage the forsaken host.²⁶² Richardson has delivered the perfect *basi*.

²⁵⁹ Mary Douglas, ‘Foreword: No free gifts’, in *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, by Marcel Mauss (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. ix-xxiii (p. ix).

²⁶⁰ Marcel Mauss, p. 27. Mauss uses the term ‘potlatch’ in various ways. In this instance he uses it to describe ‘a system for the exchange of gifts’, which I will follow (Mauss, p. vii).

²⁶¹ Mauss, pp. 33-34. The Trobriand Islands are a small group of islands found in the South West Pacific, in Papua New Guinea. They are situated off the south-eastern tip of the island of New Guinea. The system is a complicated circle of gift-giving which is predominantly reserved for the ‘noble kind’, who are both trader and recipient (Mauss, p. 28). The entire system is complex, and far too long to describe here in any great detail (for further information on this see Mauss, pp. 27-39).

²⁶² The promise is just one form of gift that figures largely in Richardson’s world; for further discussion of it see Sarah Wescomb’s chapter.

When considering the sociological relevance of parity it would appear, if we are to take Mauss's work on the Trobriand islanders into consideration, that unless one is able to keep up with, and maintain, the cyclical act of gift-giving then there is little opportunity for egalitarianism. Throughout his correspondence it becomes obvious that Richardson recognizes the importance of succour as a means of maintaining his position, and his understanding of the relevance of status sees him designating roles, or categories, for people to fall into. These varying categories help Richardson to deposit the right gift to the right person.²⁶³

The remainder of Barbauld's biography is split into sections which look at aspects of Richardson's life and personality that might be of interest to her reader: love; women and education; religion and beliefs; vanity; illness and appearance; and additional information that Barbauld deems important enough to include. Barbauld uses these sections to carry on with her construction of Richardson as a worthy writer, and personality. She wants to offer her reader a panorama of Richardson's life and achievements.

Barbauld is in pursuit of any knowledge that helps her, and her reader, to understand how Richardson is able to record scenes of such passionate love. Her assumption is that Richardson's marriages were 'of convenience and calm affection', however, she believes that he 'intimates that he once loved with ardour.'²⁶⁴ Barbauld includes a letter written by Richardson to Lady Bradshaigh which substantiates her suspicions.²⁶⁵ The letter shows Richardson revealing four other possible liaisons that he had personally encountered, before forcing himself to end the discussion. Barbauld deduces that his final and most impassioned recollection is, in fact, about the lady that he writes about in *The History of Mrs. Beaumont*.²⁶⁶ Barbauld has discovered that Richardson writes from personal experience.

Richardson enjoyed the company of women and Barbauld suggests that 'He lived in a kind of flower-garden of ladies' who 'were his inspirers, his critics, his

²⁶³ Gifts that Richardson uses vary from gifts of flattery and compliment, to offers of money and the use of his homes, to individual correspondents being indebted to Richardson for his letters or 'favours', as well as the gift of introduction between one correspondent and another. Each of them will be discussed throughout this thesis.

²⁶⁴ Barbauld, I, p. clviii.

²⁶⁵ Barbauld, I, pp. clix-clx.

²⁶⁶ Barbauld includes a study of *The History of Mrs. Beaumont* on the fifth volume of her edition (Barbauld, V, 301-348).

applauders.’²⁶⁷ In return for their attentions he would engage in conversation with them ‘on some subject of sentiment’, encouraging them ‘to display the treasures of intellect they possessed’.²⁶⁸ Barbauld is unknowingly showing that Richardson and his ladies were engaged in the archaic *kula* system described earlier by Mauss. Barbauld presents a solid account of Richardson’s writing habits and tells us that he wrote early in the morning, in a small grotto, before his ‘family were up’.²⁶⁹ He would join them for breakfast where he would update them on his work, and it was during these updates that he received the critiques and often ‘the pleadings’.²⁷⁰ Richardson would also use this time to offer advice on any problems that his friends would have.²⁷¹ Richardson’s clinic system was useful as he was able to gauge, albeit in some small measure, the response that his works could receive upon their publication.²⁷²

Barbauld’s own commitment to education, along with her recognition that ‘Mr. Richardson was a friend to mental improvement in women’ may have led her to accept the editing project from Richard Phillips. Barbauld is aware of the ‘restrictions’ that the period had ‘imposed upon the sex.’²⁷³ She is all the more admiring of Richardson because he incorporates progressive thinking into his novels – *Clarissa* had learned Latin – as well as being respectful of the time in which he was living – Harriet Byron has no understanding of ‘learned languages’.²⁷⁴ Barbauld pieces together a convincing argument to support her thesis of Richardson as a forward-thinking pioneer by using an example of the opinions of the respected eighteenth century letter-writer and artist Mary Delany:

The prejudice against any appearance of extraordinary cultivation in women, was, at that period, very strong. It will scarcely be believed, by this generation, that Mrs. Delany, the accomplished Mrs. Delany, objects to the words *intellect* and *ethics*, in one of the conversation pieces, in *Grandison*, as too scholastic to proceed

²⁶⁷ Barbauld, I, p. clxi.

²⁶⁸ Barbauld, I, p. clxi. The list of women that Barbauld provides are: ‘Miss Mulso, afterwards Mrs. Chapone, Miss Highmore, now Mrs. Duncombe; Miss Talbot, niece to Secker, and author of some much esteemed devotional pieces; Miss Prescott, afterwards Mrs. Mulso; Miss Fieldings; and Miss Colliers’.

²⁶⁹ Barbauld, I, p. clxii.

²⁷⁰ Barbauld, I, p. clxii.

²⁷¹ Barbauld, I, p. clxii.

²⁷² Barbauld, I, p. clxii.

²⁷³ Barbauld, I, p. cxliii.

²⁷⁴ Barbauld, I, p. cxliii.

from the mouth of a female. What would some of these critics have said, could they have heard young ladies talking of gases, and nitrous oxyd, and stimuli, and excitability, and all the terms of modern science. The restraint of former times was painful and humiliating; what can be more humiliating than the necessity of affecting ignorance? and yet, perhaps, it is not undesirable that female genius should have something to overcome; so much, as to render it probable, before a woman steps out of the common walks of life, that her acquirements are solid, and her love for literature decided and irresistible. These obstacles did not prevent the Epictetus of Mrs. Carter, nor the volumes of Mrs. Chapone, from being written and given to the world.²⁷⁵

Not only does this provide Barbauld with an opportunity to confirm Richardson's contribution to, and advocacy of, education in women, but it also ensures that she is able to fortify her own opinions on the subject. Even though the tone of the passage is composed, the subtext is there to remind the nineteenth century reader of the new status of women, and serves as a gentle warning against the inequitable events of their history.

Religion is 'conspicuous in all his works' but Richardson never 'recommend[s] a particular system', choosing instead to leave his reader to decide their own path.²⁷⁶ For Barbauld, this clever decision contributes toward his works being 'highly valued'.²⁷⁷ She reminds her reader of the 'virtuous sentiment and good morals' of the Richardson house, and again includes a letter, this time from a foreign visitor, who became a correspondent of Richardson's between 1754-1758.²⁷⁸ Erasmus Reich's five and a half page letter is sensational, and serves Barbauld well. Had she chosen only to include one epistle in her biography then this one would have educated her reader well in the glories of Richardson. In it Reich, somewhat uncomfortably, propels Richardson to divinity.

Even in this first biography of Richardson, Barbauld deems it necessary to address the issue of his vanity. Subsequent biographies and criticism of Richardson have enjoyed its negative prospect, with Eaves and Kimpel offering a

²⁷⁵ Barbauld, I, pp. clxiii-clxiv. Mary Delany (née Granville), and her husband Patrick Delany, were correspondents of Richardson between 1739-1758.

²⁷⁶ Barbauld, I, p. clxv.

²⁷⁷ Barbauld, I, p. clxv.

²⁷⁸ Barbauld, I, pp. clxv-clxx. The visitor is recorded as a 'Mr. Reich, from Leipsic.' Erasmus Reich visited England in 1756 but Eaves and Kimpel date the first letter from Reich to Richardson as 10 May 1754 (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 675). Reich was a bookseller in Leipzig who had assisted in hurrying along the German translation of *Pamela* by passing it on to a 'distinguished writer' called Christian Gellert (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 415).

sub-section dedicated to it in their biography.²⁷⁹ Barbauld's main form of defence is to claim that 'he was fed with praise, and, with regard to that diet, it may be truly affirmed, that -----increase of appetite doth grow/By what it feeds on.'²⁸⁰ She is also realistic about Richardson's abilities, claiming that perhaps he did not have 'the will, nor perhaps the variety of knowledge' to turn the topic of conversation from himself to something else.²⁸¹ Barbauld includes a scathing passage about Richardson and written by James Boswell and purportedly from Samuel Johnson:

"I only remember that he expressed a high value for his talents and virtues: But that this perpetual study was to ward off petty inconveniences, and to procure petty pleasures; that his love of continual superiority was such, that he took care always to be surrounded by women, who listened to him implicitly, and did not venture to contradict his opinions; and that his desire of distinction was so great, that he used to give large vails to Speaker Onslow's servants, that they might treat him with respect."²⁸²

Of course, Barbauld defends her subject as best she can by informing her reader that the ladies that Richardson surrounded himself with were both capable of 'appreciat[ing] his works' and offering valuable contributions to them.²⁸³ She averts the possibility of further condemnation by alluding to the dryness of Johnson and Gibbon by saying that Richardson 'was not writing a dictionary, like Johnson, or a history, like Gibbon. He was a novel writer; his business was [...] with the human heart [...], with the female heart.'²⁸⁴

Barbauld continues to wrestle with the subject of Richardson's vanity and tries approaching it from a different angle but it backfires on her as Richardson ends up sounding arrogant in his own insecurities. Barbauld sets up Richardson's exoneration by listing his attributes then argues that surely with all of these assets 'we may allow in him a little shade of vanity, as a tribute to human weakness'.²⁸⁵ She attacks Johnson's reference to the subject of 'the vails' that Richardson offers

²⁷⁹ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 721.

²⁸⁰ Barbauld, I, p. clxxi.

²⁸¹ Barbauld, I, p. clxxi.

²⁸² Barbauld, I, pp. clxxi-clxxii.

²⁸³ Barbauld, I, p. clxxii.

²⁸⁴ Barbauld, I, p. clxxii.

²⁸⁵ Barbauld, I, p. clxxiii.

to Onslow's servants and suggests that this has to be a testament to Richardson's standards and sees it as 'a disgraceful circumstance [...] to the customs of our country, and to Mr. Onslow, if he could not make his servants pay respect to his guests without it.'²⁸⁶

Barbault's annoyance at Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's 'contemptuous' hypothesis that "'The doors of the great [...] were never opened to him [Richardson]'" provides her with another opportunity to reiterate her devoted appreciation of Richardson.²⁸⁷ She again extols his 'genius', his 'distinguished talent', and his ability to entertain.²⁸⁸ Barbault also states that:

the reader must be amply convinced, by the list of Richardson's friends and correspondents, that Lady Wortley's assertions are as untrue as illiberal. It is strange that she, whose talents, not her rank, have transmitted her name to posterity, should not have experienced a more kindly fellow-feeling towards talent; but the public will judge which was most estimable, she whose conduct banished her from those with whom her birth entitled her to associate, or he who, by his merit, raised himself above the class whence he drew his humble origin.²⁸⁹

The same assertions could be applied to Samuel Johnson's earlier quote as Richardson had come to his aid on more than one occasion. For example one reported incident that Austin Dobson tells us about is that Johnson had been 'arrested at his house in Gough Square on 16 March 1756 for a debt of £5 18s and was only released by a prompt loan from Samuel Richardson.'²⁹⁰ Again these treacherous remarks by his contemporaries show the vulnerability of a person who has been propelled into the realms of celebrity.

Barbault adds on a short apology. Its seemingly out of place positioning is deliberate and serves to strengthen Richardson's reputation following the attempted attacks from Johnson and Montagu:

²⁸⁶ Barbault, I, p. clxxiii.

²⁸⁷ Barbault, I, pp. clxxiii-clxxiv.

²⁸⁸ Barbault, I, p. clxxiv.

²⁸⁹ Barbault, I, p. clxxv.

²⁹⁰ Austin Dobson, *Eighteenth Century Vignettes* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1911), pp. 130-131.

I omitted to mention, in its proper place, that Richardson had a pressing invitation from the Moravians to go to Germany. He was written to, for that purpose, by the secretary of Count Zinzendorf, their head, and solely, it should seem, from their high opinion of the moral tendency of his writings.²⁹¹

Barbauld includes a physical description of Richardson, as well as a commentary upon his speech and manners. As if to counteract any negative repercussions about Richardson's description of himself, Barbauld includes a letter from Lady Bradshaigh which claims that she was able to recognise him from a description he had given her.²⁹² Barbauld is easily led into a discussion about Richardson's ill-health, her assertion being that it was 'the usual consequence of bad air, confinement, sedentary employment, and the wear and tear of the mental faculties' that contributed to his ailments.²⁹³ Richardson's illnesses do not deter Barbauld from furthering his iconic status; instead she recognises an opportunity to put them to good use:

It is astonishing how a man who had to raise his fortune by the slow process of his own industry, to take care of an extensive business, to educate his own family, and be a father to many of his relations, could find time in the breaks and pauses of his avocations, for work so considerable in size as well as in merit, "nineteen close printed volumes," as he often mentions, when insisting upon it, in answer to the instances of his correspondents, that he would write more, that he had already written more than enough. Where there exists strong genius, the bent of the mind is imperious, and will be obeyed: but the body too often sinks under it, "I had originally," (says he) "a good constitution; I hurt it by no intemperance, but that of application."²⁹⁴

Barbauld shows her reader that Richardson not only achieved great works of literature, but also managed to do this despite having to contend with plenteous responsibilities. For Barbauld, Richardson was not a man who simply just wrote, he was also a worker, a business man, a teacher, a father, and the head of a large

²⁹¹ Barbauld, I, p. clxxv.

²⁹² See Barbauld, I, pp. clxxvii-clxxviii.

²⁹³ Barbauld, I, p. clxxviii.

²⁹⁴ Barbauld, I, pp. clxxviii-clxxix.

extended family. Again she reiterates the robust brilliance found in Richardson, and blames its demand to be heard on the failings in his constitution.

From this point onwards Barbauld does not work in sections but brings together any small details concerning Richardson that she wants her audience to know about. We learn that his hand-writing ‘was small, even, and very legible’, that even though he was ‘a strong advocate of public worship, he had discontinued, for many years, going to church’ and gives the reason as ‘not being able to bear a crowd.’²⁹⁵ However, Barbauld is pragmatic about this and suggests that ‘It is probable, however, that he also wanted the relaxation of a Sunday spent in the country.’²⁹⁶ For his illnesses he ‘took tar-water’, but Barbauld recognises that his ‘best remedy was probably his country house, and the amusement of Tunbridge, which he was accustomed to frequent in the season.’²⁹⁷ Richardson did not ride, preferring to use a ‘chamber-horse, one of which he kept at each of his houses’, and due to his nervous disposition, he required assistance with the simplest of daily activities such as ‘raising a small glass of wine to his mouth’.²⁹⁸ Even though Barbauld recognises that ‘He loved to complain’, she soothes this aggravating aspect of his personality by claiming that most people that ‘suffer[s] from disorders that affect the very springs of life and happiness’ react similarly.²⁹⁹ We should remember the irony of Richardson supposed serial ill-health, by noting that despite it he still managed to remain alive for seventy-two years, much longer than the average.

When discussing Richardson’s will, Barbauld is sensitive and was evidently touched by what she found. Even in death Barbauld found Richardson to be of ‘the same equitable, friendly, and beneficent disposition’, providing not only for his wife and daughters, but also for other ‘relations, to whom, it appears, he had given little pensions during his life.’³⁰⁰ There is a fittingly sombre tone to this part of her work, as she reports on Richardson’s particular concerns for his daughter

²⁹⁵ Barbauld, I, p. clxxix.

²⁹⁶ Barbauld, I, p. clxxix.

²⁹⁷ Barbauld, I, pp. clxxix-clxxx. Even though Richardson frequented Tunbridge he was often hypocritically scathing of its visitors and their activities whilst there. See chapter 3 for further discussion of this.

²⁹⁸ Barbauld, I, p. clxxx. See Belfour chapter for further commentary by Austin Dobson on ‘Richardson at Home’.

²⁹⁹ Barbauld, I, p. clxxx. Barbauld includes Hester Chapone’s ‘Ode to Health’, at this point in her biography.

³⁰⁰ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxi.

Anne whom he considered to have ‘a weak state of health and spirits’.³⁰¹ Ironically, Anne outlived her mother and siblings. Richardson’s wife, Elizabeth, died twelve years after him.³⁰²

Before concluding her biography of Richardson with a twenty-two page introduction to her selection of his major correspondents, Barbauld includes one final letter - which takes up eight pages - from a Miss P ‘whose personal knowledge of him [Richardson] gives her account both authenticity and interest’.³⁰³ Barbauld’s claim is that the letter offers an ‘animated and lively description of his character.’³⁰⁴ After much searching I have been unable to locate the original manuscript letter, but it certainly acts as a very solid conclusion to Barbauld’s piece, and provides a smooth transition onto her selection of letters. The letter tells the story of the relationship between its writer, Mary Poole, as a small child, and the Richardson family. In it we hear that Poole was often allowed into Richardson’s study where he would bestow her with affection and gifts of sweets and books. According to Poole it was this early contact with literature that cemented a “‘life long’” interest in books for her and her friends.³⁰⁵ The letter tells us that Richardson was a frequent visitor to her house – they were neighbours – and she has a vivid recollection of “‘creep[ing] to his knee, and hang[ing] upon his words’”, as did her entire family.³⁰⁶

Mary Poole’s anecdotal letter is filled with glowing examples of Richardson and his family. She is eager to tell Barbauld that she, and many others, were frequent visitors to Richardson’s house at North End, and that she would often stay there “‘for weeks’” at a time, “‘domesticated as one of his own children.’”³⁰⁷ At this point in his life Richardson spent most of the week at his business address in town, but at weekends he would return to be surrounded by his family, whom

³⁰¹ Barbauld, I, pp. clxxxi-clxxxii.

³⁰² Barbauld, I, p. clxxxii.

³⁰³ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxii.

³⁰⁴ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxii. For details of the letter see Barbauld, I, pp. clxxxii-cxc. Eaves and Kimpel confirm that the author of the letter, Miss P, was Mary Poole Way, born in 1743, and regarded as ‘one of Richardson’s youngest admirers’ (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 202). Her aunt, Mary Poole (née Dutton, sister of another correspondent, Margaret Dutton) had married John Poole shortly after the death of their father, a friend and neighbour of Richardson’s in Salisbury Court, Thomas Dutton in 1741. Margaret was forced to live with the Poole’s despite a growing antagonism between herself and her brother-in-law. Margaret Dutton became gravely ill – a consumption induced by John Poole, according to Richardson – and spent her last months living with the Richardson’s at Parsons Green (Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 201-202).

³⁰⁵ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxiii.

³⁰⁶ Barbauld, I, pp. clxxxiii-clxxxiv.

³⁰⁷ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxv.

he greeted with gifts aplenty. Poole confirms that Richardson was “most generous and liberal.”³⁰⁸ As the letter progresses she suggests that “piety, order, decorum, and strict regularity” contributed toward the success of the Richardson household, and she claims that these were necessary in order to “train the mind to good habits, and to depend upon its own resources.”³⁰⁹ Mary Poole’s youthful experiences of the Richardson household had obviously made an impression on her, and she attributes the environment at North End to her future pious disposition:

It has been one of the means which, under the blessing of God, has enabled me to dispense with the enjoyment of what the world calls pleasures, such as are found in crowds; and actually to relish and prefer the calm delights of retirement and books.³¹⁰

Barbauld’s inclusion of a letter which encompasses such strong messages of support for the Richardsons, emits a clear statement: not only are Richardson, and those he surrounds himself with, noble and decent, but you the reader could also benefit from engaging with him and his works. There is something fanatical, desperate, and fantastical, about it.

Poole’s letter discusses the Richardsons strict regimen – largely led by Mrs. Richardson – and she confirms that “they were seldom without” visitors who joined in with the activities.³¹¹ Poole evidently admires the parenting skills of both Richardson and his wife, and includes some anecdotes to assist in her appreciation of them.³¹² The letter writer admits that the anecdotal nature of what she has been saying might only hold a readers interest for a certain length of time, but she would be satisfied if they served only as a reminder of “the extreme benevolence, condescension, and kindness, of this exalted genius, towards young people”.³¹³ She includes here an acknowledgement of Richardson’s “patron[age] and protect[ion] of the female sex” and informs her reader that one of his young

³⁰⁸ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxv.

³⁰⁹ Barbauld, I, pp. clxxxv-clxxxvi.

³¹⁰ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxvi.

³¹¹ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxvi.

³¹² Earlier Poole had offered a story of Richardson’s skill with her as a young child (see Barbauld, I, pp. clxxxiv-clxxxv). This time we hear the story of Mrs. Richardson whose skills bears a canny resemblance to Richardson’s earlier ones (see Barbauld, I, pp. clxxxvi-clxxxvii).

³¹³ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxviii.

female companions – “Miss M. (afterwards Lady G.)” – spent so much time with him and his family that she was painted into a portrait of them.³¹⁴

As the letter progresses Poole appears to be offering the description of a highly disciplined finishing school, an environment which, similar to Richardson’s novels, was concerned with educating its attendees. The young women that resided at the Richardson’s “acquired a certain degree of fastidiousness and delicate refinement”, and it is at this point, and only ever at this point, that Poole exhibits a modicum of dissatisfaction with the Richardson’s by claiming that:

though amiable in itself [the fastidiousness and delicate refinement], rather disqualified them [the attendees] from appearing in general society, to the advantage that might have been expected, and rendered an intercourse with the world uneasy to themselves, giving a peculiar air of shiness and reserve to their whole address, of which habits his own daughters partook, in a degree that has been thought by some, a little to obscure those really valuable qualifications and talents they undoubtedly possessed.³¹⁵

Even though she has exposed a possible flaw in the Richardson residence, Poole tends to apportion blame for this blemish to Elizabeth Richardson rather than to her husband. Moreover, he walks away unscathed as she concurs that Mrs. Richardson “had high and Harlowean notions of parental authority, and kept the ladies in such order, that he often lamented [...] that they were not more open and conversable with him.”³¹⁶ Noting Poole’s reference to Elizabeth Richardson’s “Harlowean notions”, it is interesting to consider that the accusations of Richardson’s co-writing possibilities could fall more into the lap of his wife than any of his other acquaintances.

³¹⁴ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxviii. The young woman in question is Lady Elizabeth Gosling (née Midwinter) who appears in the family portrait (see included portraits) by Francis Hayman (c.1741).

³¹⁵ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxix.

³¹⁶ Barbauld, I, p. clxxxix. The timidity of Richardson’s daughters is often mentioned. Previously Barbauld had stated that Richardson was concerned that his daughters were “shy little fools” (Barbauld, I, p. cli), and that he had discussed his concerns in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh. Eaves and Kimpel also touch on the subject by including a quote from Richardson to Frances Grainger where he complains that ‘my own Girls seem more to fear me, to keep Distance to me, than I wish them to do [...] they] have more Awe than I wish them to have.’ (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 474).

Poole draws her statement to a close by listing more people that she encountered at Richardson's house, but the penultimate sentence offers final praise for all the women that stayed at North End: "at the period of his highest glory and reputation; and, in their company and conversation, his genius was matured."³¹⁷ Suffice to say that the last word of Poole's letter, and therefore of Barbauld's biography, goes to Richardson where she clearly states that "His benevolence was unbounded, as his manner of diffusing it was delicate and refined."³¹⁸

Poole's letter works as an effective tool, ably complimenting Barbauld's work. As with the biography, its rich content is steeped in praise and examples of lustrous situations and associations. At the end of Poole's letter Barbauld literally draws a line under her biography of Richardson, and embarks on an introduction to his correspondence, as well as a twenty-two page primer into lives of the correspondents that she has selected for her edition.³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Barbauld, I, p. cxc. Her list includes Ann Donellan; Hester Mulso; Thomas Secker; Sir Thomas Robinson (Lord Grantham), and there are numerous '&c' cited in between.

³¹⁸ Barbauld, I, p. cxc.

³¹⁹ Rather than include her extensive synopsis here I intend, in the next chapter, to look closely at a number of Barbauld's chosen correspondents and incorporate her opinion of them there.

CHAPTER TWO

Friends or Fan Club: Richardson, His Correspondents, and Social Largesse

He was eager to meet new people – especially if they admired his work. When an anonymous letter about *Pamela* arrived, he advertised in the newspapers that he earnestly desired to correspond with the writer.¹

Though Richardson wrote with great facility, it is nevertheless true that he gave much of himself and his time to his pride of correspondents. Even casual acquaintances who asked the right questions or made the wrong objections after reading his novels received lengthy and careful answers. [...] To Richardson, his favourite correspondents were a family united by bonds of the heart as strong as those of blood relationship.²

Whatever may be said about the initiatory gift [...] the counter-gift or repayment becomes a compulsory act [...] The social relations set up by gift-exchange are among the most powerful forces which bind a social group together.³

*Do ut des; I give so that you may give.*⁴

Between 1730 and 1761 Samuel Richardson was a prolific writer and collector of letters, an activity he not only enjoyed, but saw the long term benefit of.⁵

¹ T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 529.

² John Carroll, ed., *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 29.

³ Richard M. Titmuss, *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970) pp. 72-73.

⁴ Mary Douglas, 'No free gifts', in *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies* by Marcel Mauss (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), pp. ix-xxiii (p. xii).

⁵ Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor tell us in a 2003 article for *Notes and Queries*, that 'a number of further letters have since surfaced [since Eaves and Kimpel's extensive list at the end of their 1970 biography of Richardson]', and that some can be found, transcribed, in various journals. For further information on Keymer and Sabor's discoveries see 'Samuel Richardson's Correspondence: Additions to Eaves and Kimpel', *Notes and Queries*, vol. 50, no. 2 (June 2003), pp. 215-218. There are few extant letters before 1735, but Barbauld includes one in her edition that

Richardson was overtly aware of the publishable significance of his collection, and bequeathed them as an indemnity for his children and grand-children, should they ever need them. In fact, Richardson's success in the printing trade had provided him with the necessary wealth of experience required to manage his own affairs in his new literary career. Tom Keymer and Peter Sabor offer vital context to Richardson's understanding of every aspect of the workings of the book trade:

explanations must also reach beyond the old standby of literary genius. Or rather, they must accommodate a different but no less instrumental aspect of Richardson's genius, acquired during his long climb to the position he occupied, on publishing *Pamela* in his early fifties, as one of the foremost London printers of his day. As hard-nosed an entrepreneur as any subsequent player in the vogue (and probably wealthier than them all), Richardson had a keen eye for the latest areas of growth in his trade, and in the run-up to *Pamela*'s publication had devoted increasing attention to prose fiction. It would be little exaggeration to say that the brilliance of *Pamela* lay as much in commercial strategy as in literary achievement. Through his shrewd identification of an emerging market to exploit, and his ready skill in providing a product that was in growing demand but limited, low-grade supply, Richardson could almost instantly reach thousands of consumers for whom (as one anonymous purchaser of *Pamela* laconically put it) 'Things of that Sort in English but seldom appearing made me a little curious to see it'.⁶

is dated June 1, 1730 (*The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison. Selected from the Original Manuscripts, Bequeathed by him to his Family, To which are prefixed, A Biographical Account of that Author, and Observations on his Writings*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1804). Curiously, Eaves and Kimpel choose to ignore this letter in the appendix of their biography of Richardson which 'contains all of the letters we have located to or from Richardson, including a few written for him by others, or to others for him' (Eaves and Kimpel, p.620), and Christine Gerrard explains why on page 186 of her biography *Aaron Hill: The Muses Projector 1685-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), stating that 'This letter is misdated 1730' by Barbauld. However, Eaves and Kimpel do include the letter that was printed in the *Imperial Review* from Richardson to his nephew, Thomas Verren Richardson dated 1 August, 1732. In this letter Richardson firmly outlines the expectations required of his new apprentice, and Thomas Verren Richardson began working for his uncle on 1 August, 1732. Unfortunately the arrangement did not last long, and his nephew died in November of the same year. Richardson's later work, *The Apprentice's Vade Mecum*, was based on this letter to his nephew, and was published in 1733.

⁶ *The Pamela Controversy: Criticisms and Adaptations of Samuel Richardson's Pamela 1740-1750*, ed. by Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, 6 vols, I (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), p. xv.

We see here an acknowledgement of Richardson's verve and astute business acumen. He evidently managed his own affairs well, and this hands-on approach not only shows Richardson to be a man who enjoyed being in control, but it offers an insight into a man whose strengths extended far beyond the restraints of succeeding in just one business. Richardson was able to manage the business of printing as well as the business of novel-writing and promoting. Keymer and Sabor further their hypothesis:

Though insufficiently sure of *Pamela's* success to retain the whole copyright in person (he sold a third apiece to his two publishers), Richardson then did everything within his formidable reach to boost its sale. Having targeted his market, he manipulated it with a virtuoso publicity campaign involving celebrity endorsements, newspaper leaders, a promotional sermon, and even, it was alleged, covert sponsorship of a pamphlet denouncing the novel as pornography in disguise. One need not believe this last allegation (which Richardson, of course, denied) to see his genius for what the reader quoted above pungently termed 'the Selling Part'.⁷

With this business model set in place for *Pamela*, Richardson must have employed the same strategy for his future ventures. Keymer and Sabor show us that he never shied away from his responsibility to his product, and used whatever methods necessary to secure a sale. Richardson was not only a printer, and a writer, but a marketing man and publicist. He was more than adequately experienced to manage his own group of fans.

The Celebrity

Even though the term 'celebrity' seems not to have been used in the eighteenth century in reference to a person of iconic status, it was used – and had been since c.1612 – to exemplify the importance and grandiose nature of something. The *Oxford English Dictionary* informs us that the word was used to express 'Due observance of rites and ceremonies; pomp, solemnity', and the example they cite

⁷ Keymer and Sabor, pp. xv-xvi.

from 1612 refers to religious ceremony, with their 1631 example concerning itself directly with death and enshrinement.⁸ The next usage that the *OED* categorises is: ‘The condition of being much extolled or talked about; famousness, notoriety’, and their earliest example dates back to c.1600. However, for the use of this thesis, the most pertinent explanation that the *OED* lists comes from Johnson in 1751 (ten years before Richardson’s death) when he writes in the *Rambler* No.165 that: ‘I did not find myself yet enriched in proportion to my celebrity.’⁹ Johnson, and more generally if the other sources in the *OED* are to be believed, has by this time recognised the word in relation to importance, elevated status, and their own sense of public recognition and worth. Despite the *OED* being unable to cite any earlier references than 1849 that link the word directly to ‘a person of celebrity; a celebrated person; a public character’, the quote from Johnson goes some way toward realising that the meaning of the word must have over-lapped at some point.¹⁰ Johnson is definitely using the word to glorify himself, and the assumption is that his reader will wholly understand it as a term, and in the context that Johnson intends. Johnson is saying that his everyday living does not reflect, and has not yet equalled, the level of fame that he has acquired; his life does not yet signify his fame. Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), cites the term ‘celebrity’ as coming from the Latin *celebritas*, and states its meaning as ‘Celebration; fame’.¹¹ Johnson’s listing of all words connected to ‘celebrity’ (to celebrate; celebrious; celebriously; celebriousness) follow the same theme: that of fame (celebration; to praise; to commend; to give praise to; to make famous; famous; in a famous manner; noted; renown; fame), and even though the term ‘celebrity’ did not, at this time, necessarily refer directly to a person in the public eye, the derivative alternatives surrounding it, and its direct connection to those of fame, were certainly in use.¹² Again, if we look to Johnson, the terms ‘famous’, ‘famously’, and ‘famousness’ are all synonymous with the ‘renowned’,

⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary*, prepared by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, 2nd edn, vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 1018-1019.

⁹ *OED*.

¹⁰ *OED*.

¹¹ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the words are deduced from their originals, and illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best writers. To which are prefixed, A History of the Language, and An English Grammar*. By Samuel Johnson A.M. In two volumes, I (London: Printed by W. Strahan, For J. and P. Knapton; T. and T. Longman; C. Hitch and L. Hawes; A. Millar; and R. and J. Dodsley, MDCCLV).

¹² Johnson, I.

the ‘celebrated’, and the ‘much talked of and praised’, as well as being aligned to ‘celebrity’ and ‘great fame’.¹³

The Fan

In modern English the term ‘fan’ is a recognised Americanism, an abbreviated version of ‘fanatic’, set up primarily for use in sporting circles, in particular baseball.¹⁴ Not only does the *OED* draw attention to its connection to sport, but it also recognises its development into ‘a keen follower of a specified hobby or amusement, and *gen.* an enthusiast for a particular person or thing.’¹⁵ The original use and spelling – ‘fann or phan’ – of the word dates back to the seventeenth century, and the *OED* tells us that the spelling was ‘Re-formed in 19th c.’¹⁶ The earliest citation from the *OED* is 1682 (seven years before Richardson’s birth), when *New News from Bedlam* (13) refers to ‘The Loyal Phans to abuse’, and later (40) ‘Loyal Fanns to defame. And damn all Dissenters on purpose to gain’; there is no further citation between this, in 1682, and the 1889 *Kansas Times & Star* reference to ‘baseball fans’.¹⁷ The *OED* makes no reference to the term being used between the seventeenth and nineteenth century when it was resurrected and reformed into what we now know it as (by the late nineteenth century it was in regular use). Its absence from eighteenth century vernacular is curious, but its usage being aligned with Bedlam would not have curried favour with the chattering classes of the eighteenth century. In Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) there is no mention of the singular term ‘fan’, other than it being related to wind and as an accessory that creates air. However, he does cite ‘fanatick’ as an adjective and a noun, as well as mentioning ‘fanaticism’ in connection to enthusiasm and frenzy. By doing so Johnson potentially furthers the connection to Bedlam and its reputation as an institution for the insane.¹⁸

¹³ Johnson, I.

¹⁴ *OED*, V, p. 711.

¹⁵ *OED*.

¹⁶ *OED*.

¹⁷ *OED*. *New News from Bedlam: Or More Work for Towzer and his Brother Ravencroft. Alias Hocus Pocus Whipt and Stripped: Or A Ra-ree New Fashion Cupping Glass*, a political satire written in verse, was composed under the pseudonym Theophilus Rationalis (Henry Duke).

¹⁸ Johnson, I. Johnson uses an example from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to describe its most effective usage, which also mentions the term ‘renown’ in the same stanza. Although the Bedlam hospital dates back to the thirteenth century it was during the eighteenth century that its reputation as a lunatic asylum became renowned, and it was opened to spectators who paid a penny to view and jeer at the inmates.

According to the *OED* the term ‘fan club’, whilst being a twentieth century phenomenon, is certainly something that can be connected to the eighteenth century just by virtue of what it represents. There is no mention of the term ‘fan club’ in Johnson, but the rife and well-documented club culture of the eighteenth century affords us the opportunity to consider the possibility of any collective mentality who have an enjoyment of, and common interest in, a subject, being embraced under the generic umbrella term club.¹⁹ There has long been speculation over the possibility of collaboration within Richardson’s work, and whilst this thesis makes no attempt to substantiate or disprove these accusations, his reliance – whether for vain reasons of congratulation or a genuine need for external input – upon other celebrating devotees is patent.

In chapter four I will look closely at Richardson’s early relationship with Lady Dorothy Bradshaigh, under her disguise as “Belfour”, whose categorical attempts to persuade him to alter aspects of *Clarissa* – namely her rape and death – resulted in her presenting him with possible alternatives, not to mention various threats should he refuse to comply with her wishes. Although Belfour’s suggestions fell largely upon deaf ears, Richardson did endeavour to draw upon Bradshaigh’s female experiences in subsequent years. In the winter of 1754/55 Bradshaigh’s sister, Lady Elizabeth Echlin, wrote and presented Richardson with a detailed account of her own alternative ending to his novel, said to have been ‘written in order to “please and amuse” herself and to mend what was, she felt, by no means “a faultless piece.”’²⁰ The *Clarissa* phenomenon, greatly aided by Richardson’s own astute marketing skills, had gripped the hearts and minds of all who read it, and its fans became so overwhelmed by its heart-wrenching storyline that many were moved to modify it.

Richardson’s circle of friends and correspondents anticipate some of the social structures and habits of thought of what recent critics have identified as fan

¹⁹ There appears to be no hard and fast rules to the notion of what constitutes being called a club, as Thomas Percy, member of Samuel Johnson’s ‘Club’ (active 1764-1784), confirms when describing Johnson’s reasons for insisting upon the number of its members not exceeding twelve: ‘It was intended the Club should consist of Such men, as that if only Two of them chanced to meet, they should be able to entertain each other without wanting the addition of more Company to pass the Evening agreeably.’ James Sambrook, ‘Club (*act.* 1764–1784)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://oxforddnb.com>> [accessed 24 Aug 2009]. However, as the years moved on and times changed, so did the number of members in Johnson’s Club.

²⁰ Dimiter Daphinoff, ed, *An Alternative Ending to Richardson’s Clarissa* by Lady Elizabeth Echlin (Bern: Francke, 1982), p. 12.

communities. Contemporary critics such as Kristina Busse, Matt Hills, Cornell Sandvoss, Scott Duchesne, and Karen Hellekson have developed work on ‘fan theory’, which makes a rewarding equivalent to what Echlin, Bradshaigh and others were contributing to some 250 years earlier. In the ‘Introduction’ to their work *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse explain that:

The community-centred creation of artistic fannish expressions such as fan fiction, fan art, and fan vids is mirrored in the creation of this book, with constant manipulation, renegotiation, commenting and revising, all done electronically among a group of people, mostly women, intimately involved in the creation and consumption of fannish goods. As the examples above indicate, the creator of meaning, the person we like to call the *author*, is not a single person but rather is a collective entity. Furthermore, that collective, what we might call *fandom*, is itself not cohesive.²¹

The notion of ‘Fandom’, as well as ‘artistic fannish expressions’, that are described here by Busse and Hellekson are surely synonymous with the creative fan-like discourse exhibited by Echlin and her contemporaries.²² For Busse and Hellekson fans are encouraged by the ‘open text’, as well as by ‘the erasure of a single author’, which ‘permits shared authorship’, and they are clear about the life of a fan story:

Every fan story is in a sense a work in progress, even when the story has been completed. To create a story [...] some writers compose and post the story, with or without so-called *beta readers* who critique, read, and help revise on various levels [...]. Others post versions and parts of the story publicly and revise accordingly to comments. Still others cowrite [sic], at times taking turns in voices and points of view. In most cases, the resulting story is part collaboration and part response to not only the source text, but also to cultural context within and outside the fannish community in which it is produced [...] However, when the story is finally

²¹ *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, ed by Karen Hellekson and Kristin Busse, (North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2006), p. 6.

²² Hellekson and Busse, p. 6.

complete and published [...] the work in progress among the creators shifts to work in progress among the readers, and a whole new level of discourse begins.²³

Richardson published *Clarissa* in seven volumes between December 1747 and December 1748, which presented his readers with the opportunity to ruminate, discuss, and dispute his narrative.²⁴ Barbauld tells us that ‘The interest which *Clarissa* excited, was increased by the suspense in which readers were so long held’, and that this prolonged period ‘wound its readers to the highest pitch of enthusiasm.’²⁵ According to Daphinoff, Echlin’s ending was not presented to Richardson for another six years suggesting both the power that his original work had on the reading community, as well as the extent of Echlin’s fannish behaviour.

Scott Duchesne offers an insight into modern ideas of ‘Stardom’ and ‘Fandom’ by describing a scene not dissimilar to the one sketched in 1751 by Susanna Highmore of Richardson entertaining his fans with a reading of *Sir Charles Grandison* in his grotto at North End.²⁶ Duchesne tells us that:

Since the early 1970s, hundreds of Science Fiction and Fantasy (SF&F) conventions have been held worldwide. They are fuelled by the appearance of actors, writers, directors, artists, producers and designers promoting their latest projects, responding to questions of varying obscurity, having their picture taken, and signing autographs for thousands of fans. This convergence of fan and celebrity [...] can be interpreted variously as the free market at work, a twenty-first century spiritual pilgrimage, a unique form of nerd tourism, or an amalgam of the three. However one defines them [...] *synergy* is the basis of the relationship between fans and celebrities at such events. From the Greek *sunergia* (cooperation) or *synergos* (working together), synergy refers to the cooperative interaction among groups that create an enhanced combined effect. SF&F conventions are defined by *human* synergy – in the sense that both fan

²³ Hellekson and Busse, p. 6.

²⁴ Daphinoff, p. 9n.

²⁵ Barbauld, I, pp. cix-cx.

²⁶ See a copy of the sketch among the pictures in this thesis, and see the Appendix for a short discussion of the sketch.

and celebrity momentarily merge for mutual advantage – exchanging emotional, psychological and social benefits through their interactions.²⁷

Highmore's sketch serves as an early example of what Duchesne describes in this section of his essay. Duchesne argues that a natural synergy takes place between celebrity and fan (in Highmore's sketch, between reader (the celebrity author) and audience (the selection of fans)), and it is evident that a mutual reliance takes place between them. The scene set in Richardson's grotto was not an isolated occasion, as he was renowned for inviting his correspondents – new and established – to his home at North End, where he was in the regular habit of reading passages of his new works to his guests. For example Barbauld records an early letter from Richardson to Aaron Hill, in which Richardson discusses his writing, and then reading, routine whilst composing *Pamela* (see Barbauld, I, lxxiv-lxxv) – Richardson appears to have continued this habit throughout his writing career, albeit in perhaps more affluent surroundings (his country house grotto).

In a more recent essay, Karen Hellekson links the idea of fan fiction to the act of gift giving, which occurs as a result of being part of a 'circle of community', in much the same way as Richardson's coterie operated:

Fans insist on a gift economy, not a commercial one, but it goes beyond self-protective attempts to fly under the radar of large corporations, their lawyers, and their cease-and-desist letters. Online media fandom is a gift culture in the symbolic realm in which fan gift exchange is performed in complex, even exclusionary symbolic ways that create a stable nexus of giving, receiving, and reciprocity [...] Writer and reader create a shared dialogue that results in a feedback loop of gift exchange, whereby the gift of artwork or text is repetitively exchanged for the gift of reaction, which is itself exchanged, with the goal of creating and maintaining social solidarity.²⁸

²⁷ Scott Duchesne, 'Stardom/Fandom: Celebrity and Fan Tribute Performance', *Canadian Theatre Review*, 141 (2010)

<http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/canadian_theatre_review/v141/141.141.duchesne.html> [accessed 20 April 2010] (pp. 21-27)

²⁸ Karen Hellekson, 'A Fannish Field of Value: Online Fan Gift Culture', *Cinema Journal* 48, 4 (2009) <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cinema_journal/summary/v048/48.4.hellekson.html> [accessed 20 April 2010] pp. 113-118 (pp. 113-116).

Hellekson's hypothesis enlightens our conception of Richardson's eighteenth century understanding of the celebrity-fan dynamic, and she later uses Mauss's theory to explain the usefulness of the gift when 'cement[ing] a social structure'.²⁹ Both Hellekson and Duchesne identify with the idea of giving, receiving, and reciprocating in relation to the celebrity and the fan, and whether it is Duchesne's notion of synergy, or Hellekson's more straightforward theory of exchange, their contemporary ideology working alongside an early modern paradigm is patent.

Richardson's club, whilst seemingly by invitation only, was in fact available to virtually anyone who wrote to him. If nothing else then his collected correspondence is certainly evidence of this. If it is not fan mail, then what is it? Unlike Bowyer's ledgers, it is not a record of business, and unlike Hume's letters it is not so much a record of a mind, or a philosophy of development, although Richardson might like to have thought it this.³⁰ In fact, what Richardson's correspondence is, is a record of his public, fame-infused life and a well thought out plan of a much desired and sort after legacy, enabled by a multifarious faction who shared a love of fiction, and the accolade of having a famous author as a correspondent. Richardson actively encouraged correspondents, he sought out pen-pals, and frequently hosted readings of his new works (the sketch by Susanna Highmore at the beginning of Barbauld's second volume ably depicts one such gathering), which were applauded and celebrated.³¹ Richardson was a social animal, even if only ever on his own terms. He gathered people around him who, whether by letter, by face-to-face meeting or by the giving of gifts (often editions

²⁹ Hellekson, p. 115.

³⁰ The Bowyer ledgers, kept between 1710 and 1777, by father and son, both William Bowyer, present us with extensive information concerning authorship, book production and book distribution in eighteenth century London. The ledgers record the journey of the text as it moved through from printing houses, and provides detailed notes on types of paper, types, format, corrections, number printed et cetera. William Bowyer Senior, was a contemporary of Richardson, who also entered the Stationers' Company but did not progress as far as Richardson. Both printers experienced loss of business – though Richardson slightly less so – through fire. David Hume's letters, to a degree, exhibit his intellectual development, but as John Robertson argues '[Hume] convinced of his originality, [...] always restricted his expressions of disagreement with predecessors; and the bulk of his surviving correspondence dates from the last fifteen years of his life, when his works were already written.' John Robertson, 'Hume, David (1711–1776)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>> [accessed 24 Aug 2009].

³¹ See a copy of Highmore's drawing among the illustrations in this thesis, and the Appendix for further discussion of its importance.

of his own novels) would, more often than not, support and adhere to his recommended way of life. As the manager of his own fan club, Richardson supervised his fans effectively, and provided them with a safe haven - his famous grotto, and perhaps more controversially, within the pages of his letters - in which to discuss, share and tease out ideas.

The manuscript letters that we are left with form the basis of the fan club, a type of prosopography that draws a group picture of fan mentality. In effect these letters are his fan mail as they represent, on paper, the increasing importance bestowed upon him by others, as well as by himself. In many cases, Richardson's *Correspondence* also provides us with the only available evidence of who many of these individuals were. It provides them with an opportunity to continue their legacies some 200 hundred or so years after they are dead. Even though the majority of the letters are only ever in praise of Richardson – any pejorative ones, and undoubtedly there were some, have been mysteriously omitted – they still offer us an insightful journey into the celebrated life of a man who was possibly the first manager of his own fan club.

Richardson was known to have organised his letters with the notion of future publication in mind, and his choices clearly show how he wanted to be remembered: as a writer, and a famous one at that. Eaves and Kimpel tell us that he may have 'started preserving his correspondence' shortly after 'receiving letters from unknown and often anonymous correspondents', and that he 'did have a file of letters [...which] He often talked of revising'.³² They also tell us that around the time of *Clarissa* he again 'preserved' any letters he received amongst 'a considerable bulk' of others.³³ We learn that the arrangement of the correspondence now seen in the Forster Collection differs from that originally set out by Richardson, and that 'It is arranged in volumes which are not identical with the volumes in which Richardson kept it and has a foliation which does not correspond to his pagination.' Perhaps the most rigorous organisation of his vast quantities of letters came toward the end of his life:

There was one more literary labour of sorts with which Richardson, during the seven years he had still to live after the completion of *Sir Charles Grandison*,

³² Eaves and Kimpel, p. 121 and p. 183*n*.

³³ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 285.

occupied a part of that free time [...]. He worked over his correspondence, preparing it for possible eventual publication. Even before he began to write *Pamela* he had saved the letters of such correspondents as Aaron Hill and Dr. Cheyne. During the 1740s he began to keep copies of some of the letters he wrote. Especially after the publication of *Clarissa*, when he was making new friends and probably writing and receiving more letters than before, he made a more or less systematic effort to preserve his correspondence. That part of it which is still extant shows that he went over it late in life, arranging it in volumes, sometimes with indexes, deleting passages he did not consider suitable for publication and disguising names.³⁴

Richardson's fanatical maintenance of his letters is surely his life's work. Yes, he wrote pioneering novels that arguably changed the face of the novel, but as Eaves and Kimpel make clear his collecting, hoarding and sorting of personal epistles was deliberate and methodical.³⁵ If not to secure his own legacy, and exhibit his overwhelming popularity, what other purpose can this engineered collection have.

Richardson is careful about what he selects, and tends not to include many of his business letters. He prefers instead to rely upon the surfeit of personal letters which can only ever be there to serve in his self-promotion.

The Fans

In this chapter I will be considering the role of a selection of Richardson's correspondents in relation to himself, and an analysis of his pathological acts of gift-giving will also weave through the chapter. The correspondents are, of course, taken from Barbauld's edition, and the sequence in which I discuss them is dependent upon my own interpretation – beginning with Richardson's most obvious fans, then moving toward those who flirt on the periphery between fan and friend – of the individual fans' commitment and idolisation of the novelist. However, a small number of Richardson's correspondents, whilst adoring him and

³⁴ Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 436-437.

³⁵ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 437n.

his work, share equal status as a friend and the two, at times, overlap. Unlike Barbauld's selection, mine is not in chronological order.³⁶

Whilst this chapter will aim to look briefly at a selection of Richardson's main correspondents – more specifically some of those included by Barbauld in her 1804 edition – I have, for the purpose of this thesis, selected two of his closer intimates, Lady Dorothy Bradshaigh (specifically the Belfour letters), and Sarah Wescomb (later Scudamore) to focus on more fully in separate chapters.³⁷ Bradshaigh, as Belfour, starts out as an overt fan of Richardson, and Scudamore, whilst exhibiting certain fan-like qualities, is undoubtedly a friend.

Susanna Highmore and Hester Mulso

Susanna Highmore was the daughter of the artist, and long-time friend of Richardson, Joseph Highmore. A talented, but unrecognised painter herself, Susanna Highmore was a regular correspondent of Richardson, as well as an ardent fan of his works. She married another member of Richardson's circle of admirers, John Duncombe, in 1761.

Hester Mulso was the daughter of a country gentleman, Thomas Mulso. Her talents as a writer secured her position amongst the female literary elite of the mid eighteenth century. She married John Chapone, another young man involved in Richardson's circle, and went on to become an eminent bluestocking.

Even though there are letters from Susanna Highmore to Richardson, no letters between Richardson and Mulso were available to Barbauld. Barbauld has relied on Highmore's contribution, and as she says in volume I of her edition: 'her [Hester Mulso] part of it, with the rest of her letters, was withdrawn from the collection after Richardson's death.'³⁸ The women appear together here as a

³⁶ The dates of the letters, taken from Barbauld's edition and at times Eaves and Kimpel's catalogue (see Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 620-704), are crucial as they show Richardson's sustained popularity.

³⁷ My reasons for specifically including Belfour's letters are offered in chapter 4 of this thesis.

³⁸ Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison. Selected from the original manuscripts, bequeathed by him to his family, to which are prefixed, a biographical account of that author, and observations on his writings, by Anna Laetitia Barbauld*, 6 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), I, p. xcxcviii. For Hester Chapone's letters to Richardson see *The Posthumous Works of Mrs Chapone, containing her correspondence with Mr Richardson; a series of letters to Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, and some fugitive pieces...together with an account of her life and character drawn up by her own family* (London: John Murray, 1807).

matter of logic, as to separate them would compromise their letter exchange narrative.

The first letter to Susanna Highmore from Richardson is dated 2 August 1748, and Eaves and Kimpel confirm that this is the first extant letter between them. Richardson had been a friend and correspondent of her father, the painter Joseph Highmore, for some time, and by 1750 Richardson and Susanna Highmore were in frequent communication. Susanna Highmore was one of Richardson's favourites, and the familiarity they shared with one another is reflected in his letters. Unfortunately there are no existing letters from her, which is curious as Eaves and Kimpel not only tell us that 'Mrs. Barbauld was given letters in the possession of Mrs. John Duncombe (formerly Miss Highmore), including some from Miss Mulso', but that it is possible that Barbauld met and talked with Highmore, who would have been 79 years old when Barbauld's edition was published.³⁹

In this first letter Richardson is replying to a request from Highmore to visit her. Richardson had travelled to Tunbridge Wells 'to drink the waters for health-sake', and Susanna Highmore was staying at Hatch, some two miles away.⁴⁰ Richardson's reply is slightly defensive, which could indicate that Highmore is pressurising him to visit. At one point he asserts that he can 'ill spare the time – propose but *three* weeks – have been here *one*, last Friday – this *my* situation.'⁴¹ There is a significant amount of friendly, informal repartee between Richardson and Highmore, with Richardson seeming to berate and tease her. Their relationship is argumentative, and Richardson is harsh at times and tries to correct some of her youthful ways.

Richardson's letter is jolly, and its pace is swift, being full of references to Tunbridge and the characters that it has attracted, as well as the occasional quip directed toward the superficiality of Nash and Cibber as they go 'hunting after new beauties, and with faces of high importance traversing the walks!'⁴² However, Richardson has someone far more interesting to show to Highmore, and encourages her to come and see:

³⁹ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 438*n* and p. 485.

⁴⁰ Barbauld, II, 204.

⁴¹ Barbauld, II, 204.

⁴² Barbauld, II, 206.

God bless you, come and see them! – And if you do, I will shew you a still more grotesque figure than either. A sly sinner, creeping along the very edges of the walks, getting behind benches: one hand in his bosom, the other held up to his chin, as if to keep it in his place: afraid of being seen, as a thief of detection. The people of fashion, if he happens to cross a walk (which he always does with precipitation) *unsmiling* their faces, as if they thought him in their way; and he as sensible of so being, stealing in and out of the book-sellers shop, as if he had one of their glass-cases under his coat. Come and see this odd figure! You never *will* see him, unless *I* shew him to you: and who knows when an opportunity for that may happen again at Tunbridge?⁴³

The ‘grotesque figure’ described here is most certainly Richardson himself, and we see a side to Richardson that is not often on show. He aims to seduce Highmore with amusement, and we can only imagine the young woman giggling at the picture he has drawn of himself.

Immediately following this enchanting flirtation, Richardson enters into a short, but juvenile sounding, debate about letter length. It would seem that Highmore has criticised Richardson for writing short letters. Richardson defends himself by correcting her: ‘But how little reason have you to call mine short, when I write more (in quantity) in one line, than you do in three’.⁴⁴

The second letter is dated over a year later on 26 November 1749, and Richardson has spent the evening with Susanna Highmore’s parents. According to Highmore, Richardson owes her a letter and he attempts to defend himself with claims that he ‘did not imagine [...] you expected another letter from me till you got to Sheen, and then a notice of attending you on your way home, according to my promise’.⁴⁵ A variety of subjects are discussed in this letter, but essentially it is concerned with duty and the fulfilment of it, and Richardson is unashamed to use *Clarissa* as a tool to assist him when trying to connect with his young correspondent. After much wrangling – whereby Richardson appears to quote from Highmore’s letters to him, and then reply to her quotes – Richardson relies on the power of his novel to drive home his message to Highmore:

⁴³ Barbauld, II, 206.

⁴⁴ Barbauld, II, 207.

⁴⁵ Barbauld, II, 209.

Even this, you must know, my Miss Highmore, that the want of duty on one part justifies not the non-performance of it on the other, where there is a reciprocal duty. There can be no merit, strictly speaking, in performing a duty; but the performance of it on one side, when it is not performed on the other, gives something so like a merit, that I am ready almost to worship the good mind that can do it.

You will be less surprised, Madam, that these strict notions are mine, when you will recollect, that, in the poor *ineffectual* History of Clarissa, the parents are made more cruel, more implacable, more punishable in short, in order to inculcate this very doctrine, that the want of duty on one side enhances the merit on the other, where it is performed.⁴⁶

For Richardson to use his novel as a way of strengthening his argument he has to be certain of its desired effect upon Highmore. He has to implement a strategy that will resonate with her, and it would appear that *Clarissa* holds that degree of importance to Highmore (in varying degrees *Clarissa* weaves in and out of the Richardson-Highmore correspondence).⁴⁷ Richardson also touches on a point not dissimilar to Mauss's discoveries of duty and reciprocated gift-giving, some 200 years later.

The remaining letters included by Barbauld in her edition, show more of the humorous, teasing side of Richardson. His manner with Susanna Highmore, whilst instructive, is also jovial, mischievous and strangely flirtatious. He aims to guide her by highlighting her weaknesses in order for her to correct them. Susanna Highmore's relationship with John Duncombe presents Richardson with further opportunities for teasing, and the letters reflect this (see Richardson's letters dated 4 June 1750, 22 June 1750, and 20 July 1750).⁴⁸ Barbauld's inclusion

⁴⁶ Barbauld, II, 217.

⁴⁷ For specific references to *Clarissa* see Richardson's letters to Susanna Highmore dated 2 August 1748 (Barbauld, II, 208), 26 November 1749 (Barbauld, II, 213-218), 'Wednesday Night' (Barbauld, II, 221, and 224 for reference to Charlotte Grandison), 4 June 1750 (Barbauld, II, 236), 22 June 1750 (Barbauld, II, 240 and 249), and 20 July 1750 (Barbauld, II, 253).

⁴⁸ Barbauld, II, 237-250. Duncombe and Highmore went on to marry in April 1761, a few months before Richardson's death, but not before a 'long-drawn-out courtship' had ensued (Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 341-342). Early biographies of John Duncombe by John Nichols (1786 and 1814), Alexander Chambers (1812), and Rowland Freeman (1821) all agree that the marriage between Duncombe and Highmore took place in St. Ann's Church Soho on 20 April 1763. However, Nathan Drake (1809) in his short biography sets the date at 1761, concurring with Barbauld (who

of the Highmore letters aim to show Richardson as a father-figure who guided not only his own daughters but others too. Interestingly there is relatively little information about how he governed his own children but these letters, and others, serve as extant evidence of how he interfered with others.⁴⁹

At this point the correspondence between Richardson and Highmore is interrupted, and replaced by a selection of letters from Susanna Highmore and Hester Mulso.

The first letter that Anna Barbauld selects from Susanna Highmore to Hester Mulso is without a date, and only tells us that it was written at '*North End, past 11 at Night*'.⁵⁰ There is an air of excited joy about the letters between Highmore and Mulso, and a genuine rush of enthusiasm for one another is evident. The fact that the first letter tells us the hour and place that it was written exhibits a school-girl naughtiness, and the content of the letter presents yet more excited charm. The girls have nick-names for one another, Suky (Susanna Fielding) and Hecky (Hester Mulso), and they also refer to the other member of their trio, Pressy (Mary Prescott). Highmore is happy to be a North End with 'our honoured papa, Richardson', and we learn that she is surrounded by her friends, particularly 'the amiable Pressy'.⁵¹ As a reward for their company Richardson gives the girls a gift: he allows them to hear new extracts from *Sir Charles Grandison*, and Highmore ecstatically announces: 'Oh! My dear, Sir Charles will be all we wish him – I am sure he will – and is destined to shew the world what the purest love should be'.⁵²

Highmore's letter moves into the realms of the gothic novel when she begins to emulate a letter that Mulso had written to Richardson. She tells her friend that this is what she is doing, and assures her that Richardson only read certain sections of the letter to her, such as Mulso's hopeful wishes of a letter soon 'from your

had published her work only five years earlier, suggesting that Drake got his information from her) and Eaves and Kimpel, whose information comes from the *Gentleman's Magazine* (XXXI, 188).

⁴⁹ There are conflicting stories about Richardson's parenting. Lady Bradshaigh, for example, claims that Richardson was too critical of his daughters, but Mary Poole intimates, in her letter used by Barbauld (see Barbauld, I, p. clxxxvi and p. clxxxix) that it was Mrs. Richardson who was the task-master in the house. Sarah Wescomb's letters are among those that offer information on Richardson's innate need to parenting others children.

⁵⁰ Barbauld, II, 258. Eaves and Kimpel do not list these letters between Highmore and Mulso, and they do not form part of the Forster Collection.

⁵¹ Barbauld, II, 258.

⁵² Barbauld, II, 259.

Suky.’⁵³ Highmore informs Mulso that she had intended to write sooner but knows that her friend will understand the difficulties of trying to write when there are so many other distractions. The letter ends with a flourish of love for her friend, as she assures Hester Mulso that ‘none can esteem and love her with more sincerity than her faithful and affectionate S.H.’.⁵⁴

Dated 18 July 1751 the next letter from Highmore to Mulso opens with the hopeful satisfaction that a misunderstanding about whose turn it is to write has been resolved between Mulso and ‘your Pressy’.⁵⁵ The letter stretches to three pages, but does little more other than to describe Highmore’s boredom as she spends the summer without company in London.

As if sensing her friend’s loneliness, Hester Mulso replies to Susanna Highmore within two days (20 July 1751). However the contents of this letter would be better suited to the undated letter sent by Highmore from ‘*North End, past 11 at Night*’.⁵⁶

Hester Mulso’s letter, wherever it is best situated, has a different tone to Highmore’s; it is less excited, and more sagacious. The letter is largely concerned with Mulso’s desire to learn more about *Sir Charles Grandison*:

But that brother, my dear, will, I fear, make us despise ourselves and all the world, he is so enormously excellent. I want to hear of his faults, of his weaknesses; for some he must have: and yet is it not owing to something very bad in human nature, that mankind in general are so curious after the spots of a beautiful character, and so desirous of bringing down to their own level a fellow creature that seems soaring into a higher species? Without doubt this is one of the pitiable littlenesses of our nature; and though I never felt it with regard to a real character, I shall quarrel with my own

⁵³ Barbauld, II, 260.

⁵⁴ Barbauld, II, 262.

⁵⁵ Barbauld, II, 262.

⁵⁶ Barbauld, II, 258. Mulso’s letter refers to ‘my own Pressy; from whom I have not yet received one line’ (Barbauld, II, 266), but in Highmore’s earlier letter she opens with a wish that Mulso and Prescott have resolved their letter-writing differences (Barbauld, II, 262). Likewise Mulso discusses ‘these young gentlemen that gallant her about’ (Barbauld, II, 266), which can only be a reference to Mary Prescott’s escort mentioned in Highmore’s earlier letter (Barbauld, II, 261). In Highmore’s earlier letter to Mulso she mentions her trip to Richardson’s ‘this week or next’ (Barbauld, II, 264), and Mulso refers here to Highmore’s ‘account of [her] happiness at North End’ (Barbauld, II, 267). Mulso also refers to Charlotte Grandison in this letter: ‘I am very glad that poor Charlotte has extricated herself from the confusion I left her in’ (Barbauld, II, 267), again Highmore had mentioned the character in her earlier letter (Barbauld, II, 259).

heart for being inclined, as I fear it is, to this mean jealousy of Sir Charles's superlative merit.⁵⁷

Mulso's observations are indeed perspicacious and thought provoking, but they are also remarkable because this is the first and only time that a correspondent discusses one of Richardson's characters in terms of fictionality. In the majority of instances Richardson's characters are only ever discussed as if they are real, such is the level of belief in them. Mulso's discussion of *Sir Charles Grandison* is analytical, as she challenges Grandison's potential to have 'looked down on women as on poor, pitiable, weak, creatures'.⁵⁸ For Mulso this notion is intolerable and she claims that there is only one way that Grandison can redeem himself, and that is by showing that 'he thinks more highly of her (Harriet Byron) than of himself'.⁵⁹ Mulso is setting out a challenge for the author, just as Belfour (see chapter 4) and many others had challenged Richardson's ideas about *Clarissa*. Even though Mulso discusses and understands Richardson's novel as a work of fiction she too, on occasion, becomes distracted by the humanness of Richardson's characters:

I think I am jealous too for my favourite Clarissa; for I verily think this work promises (or threatens, which shall I say?) to excel that. I was angry with Clarissa for eclipsing Pamela; and I believe I shall now have the same quarrel with her new rival. O! may our dear Mr. Richardson live long to enjoy the fame he acquires; and which, I doubt not, will continue to augment as long as he lives.⁶⁰

Mulso and Highmore are clearly enchanted by Richardson and his novels. The young women discuss the works and have their own particular favourites. In this letter Hester Mulso is choosing to engage in a tête-à-tête about the novels and not about anything else. She readily develops a discussion about them as a direct means of cheering up her lonely friend.

This next letter from Richardson to Susanna Highmore appears in Barbauld's edition after the initial communication between Richardson and John Duncombe

⁵⁷ Barbauld, II, 267-268.

⁵⁸ Barbauld, II, 268.

⁵⁹ Barbauld, II, 268.

⁶⁰ Barbauld, II, 269.

has occurred. Barbauld has categorized these letters by date, but for the purposes of this thesis, and when looking at these individuals as fans, it is beneficial to keep their letters together in order to get a more cohesive picture of each distinct correspondence.

Dated 15 July 1753 Richardson's letter to Highmore largely concerns itself with appeasing Highmore who has alarmed Richardson by sending 'so melancholy an account of her depression of spirits'.⁶¹ The letter, whilst offering some comfort to its intended audience, also informs her that her melancholia 'shall not hinder me from telling you of your faults', and Richardson is certain that Highmore is capable of being her 'own physician' in this instance.⁶²

Dated 31 January 1754, Richardson's next letter sees him reflect upon his previous communications with Susanna Highmore. Richardson is 'extremely angry' with himself for 'the free things I have formerly written to my dear Miss Highmore', and has deduced that as he has become older he has become more temperate in his ideas. For this epiphany he sarcastically congratulates himself. A discussion develops about Highmore's suggestion that 'we should make great allowances in errors, not grossly immoral, for those who have not had the benefit of being accustomed in their youth to good and approving company', but Richardson vehemently disagrees.⁶³ Richardson's argument fluently leads into a monologue about the power of women with 'good sense' who, he argues, are in a prime position to influence such matters.⁶⁴ The next point addressed by Richardson again affords him the opportunity to refer to his novels. Highmore asserts that the influence of 'person's near their own age' greatly outweighs that of the parent, but Richardson fervently opposes this opinion. Although not directly linked to his argument, Richardson reinforces his argument by mentioning both Harriet Byron and Clarissa Harlowe, and is anxious that the messages in his novels are unclear.⁶⁵ Richardson is concerned that the use of his characters as messengers to the young has proved to be largely ineffectual, and he closes his letter to Highmore by stating that:

⁶¹ Barbauld, II, 280.

⁶² Barbauld, II, 281-282.

⁶³ Barbauld, II, 289.

⁶⁴ Barbauld, II, 290.

⁶⁵ Barbauld, II, 291.

I had reason to believe, that the many delicate situations that this last piece, as well as *Clarissa*, abounded with, were generally understood and attended to! What a duce! Must a man be always writing?⁶⁶

Whilst Richardson's humour is evident here, he obviously believes in the power of his novels. Although he clearly considered them to be conduct books of some description or other, he also appears to view them as something more, perhaps as an extension of them: as manuals for a successful life. Richardson's characters are intended to narrativise otherwise boring lists of do's and don'ts, they are believable fictitious examples of success or failure.

The final Richardson-Highmore letter to be included by Barbauld in her edition is dated 19 September 1757. The letter is as much to Highmore's father (Joseph Highmore) as it is to her. In it Richardson claims that he is 'In fear, of hurting your good papa, who grudges me the favour of so kindly-long a letter from you' and goes on to speak of 'a little bit of jealousy' that seems to have developed on Joseph Highmore's part.⁶⁷ As Richardson tackles the problem, he sarcastically defends his position by somewhat confrontationally enquiring as to what would happen if 'you [Susanna Highmore] should take heart at last, and marry, and your husband be sometimes distant from you!'⁶⁸ Instead of Richardson graciously considering the possibility that he has offended her father, or has in some way exceeded the boundaries of his letter-writing relationship with Susanna Highmore, he essentially chooses to reprimand and demean Joseph Highmore in a letter to his own daughter. Once this issue is acknowledged Richardson feels free to continue his letter by nonchalantly discussing Susanna Highmore's present activities. However, Richardson cannot conclude his letter without one further remark pointed directly at Joseph Highmore: 'And there, Mr. Highmore, is an end, I hope, of your tender solicitude for the eyes of our dear girl, on my account, for the present!'⁶⁹

Richardson's behaviour in this letter is undermining. He and Joseph Highmore were close friends, but he cannot resist the temptation to exercise a somewhat

⁶⁶ Barbauld, II, 293.

⁶⁷ Barbauld, II, 308. Both Richardson and younger female correspondents often refer to him as 'papa', but in this instance Joseph Highmore is certainly the referred to papa.

⁶⁸ Barbauld, II, 308.

⁶⁹ Barbauld, II, 311.

deluded sense of status over his equally successful friend. There is a sense that Richardson considers any criticism of himself, no matter how great, as misplaced and he simply disregards it as trivial or nonsensical.

The final letters, included by Barbauld, from Susanna Highmore to Hester Mulso continue in the same animated manner as the others, and are both undated. However, we can deduce that they must have been written shortly before the final stages of *Sir Charles Grandison's* composition as references to the novel weave through both letters. The first letter informs us that Highmore has been asked by Richardson to 'attempt[ed] a preface for Sir Charles', and she encourages her friend to offer one too.⁷⁰ As the letter progresses Highmore points out to Mulso that she is obliged to offer a preface for the novel in order to prevent the possibility of her being 'called perverse or obstinate', and to avoid the wrath of 'Mr. Richardson' whose 'dreadful imagination relating to Sir Charles' is only intended 'to frighten you'.⁷¹ Highmore has, for the moment, dispensed with the saccharine references to him as 'papa Richardson' and adopts a more serious tone for what she considers to be a more serious subject: the fate of new hero, Grandison.⁷²

The second, slightly shorter letter is, again, largely concerned with *Sir Charles Grandison* and the power that Richardson, as author, has to determine the fate of its characters. The letter is gushing and buoyant, and Highmore is recommending that she and Mulso tread carefully so as not to offend 'Mr. Richardson' who:

I verily believe [...] has been spiteful enough to send these shocking aerial visions, which discompose the gentle slumbers of the most amiable of her sex [Harriet Byron], only to revenge himself on you and I, two saucy girls that pretend to be so sure that happiness must reward the virtue of heroic sufferings of the exalted lovers, for whom we interest ourselves so strenuously; let us remember he can cut their thread of life at pleasure; their destiny is in his hands, and I am not certain that our security may not provoke him to destroy them [...] and he can draw instructions equally from every catastrophe, and can wind nature as he pleases⁷³

⁷⁰ Barbauld, II, 314.

⁷¹ Barbauld, II, 315.

⁷² Barbauld, II, 315.

⁷³ Barbauld, II, 317.

Highmore is forthright in her concern showing a fanatical commitment to Richardson's novel, as well as to his power as a novelist. She discusses Richardson's authority to terminate their existence, as some sort of divine being, and places their fictional life 'in his hands'.⁷⁴ As the letter draws to a close Highmore reprimands Mulso for refusing Richardson's request that she should write a preface for *Sir Charles Grandison*, and after extolling the virtues of a recent trip to Deal that Mulso had been on, she ends her letter with a rush of affection for her friends Hester Mulso and 'Miss C_____',⁷⁵

Colley Cibber

Colley Cibber's letters to Richardson begin on 30 March 1748, and Eaves and Kimpel confirm that this is the first extant letter from Cibber.⁷⁶ This first letter is in praise of *Clarissa*, and of course Richardson's ability. Cibber had been 'passionately opposed to the ending of *Clarissa*', and had offered Richardson a serious critique of it.⁷⁷ In this letter Cibber acknowledges this and congratulates Richardson on rising above what he has said and offering something that 'must charm every sensible heart that reads them.'⁷⁸ Cibber's letters are steeped in humour, but complicated; he is a disjointed writer, confused, and never seems to say exactly what he means. He admits to being impatient, and ends the letter stating that 'to read and write, at the same time, grow troublesome. Shall I call upon you this afternoon?'⁷⁹ The relationship between Richardson and Cibber is jovial although, once again, we have no existing letters from Richardson to Cibber, but the tenor of Cibber's contributions lead us to believe that the men were on close and familiar terms. Cibber also appears in the drawing at the front of volume III of Barbauld's edition, entitled 'The remarkable characters who were at Tunbridge Wells with Richardson in 1748. from a drawing in his possession

⁷⁴ Barbauld, II, 317.

⁷⁵ Barbauld, II, 318. Miss C_____ is probably one of the Collier sisters, Jane or Margaret, or Elizabeth Carter who, though a Mrs., lived in Deal and was closely affiliated with this circle of people at this time.

⁷⁶ Barbauld, II, 167. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Barbauld includes one letter from Colley Cibber to Laetitia Pilkington (dated 29 June 1747 (Barbauld, II, 161-167)), which sets the tone of his character, and the relationship that he shared with her.

⁷⁷ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 177.

⁷⁸ Barbauld, II, 169.

⁷⁹ Barbauld, II, 170.

with references to his own writing.’⁸⁰ The letters are largely concerned with Richardson’s works, Cibber being one of the first people to see *Clarissa* in manuscript, and his letters dated 27 May 1750, 20 May 1753, and 19 November 1753, all discuss *Sir Charles Grandison*, or more specifically and perhaps more characteristically, one of its heroines, Miss Byron. The familiarity, and degree of obsession that Cibber has with Richardson’s novel, are exhibited in his letters to Richardson. They are best summed up in an epistle dated 27 May 1750:

Sir,
I have just finished the sheets you favoured me with; but never found so strong a proof of your sly ill-nature, as to have hung me up upon tenters, till I see you again. Z____ds! I have not the patience, till I know what’s become of her. – Why, you! I don’t know what to call you! – Ah! Ah! You may laugh if you please, but how will you be able to look me in the face, if the lady should ever be able to shew *hers* again? What piteous, d____d, disgraceful, pickle have you plunged her in? For God’s sake send me the sequel; or – I don’t know what to say!⁸¹

Cibber, like Elizabeth Echlin, Lady Bradshaigh, and many others, has completely engaged with Richardson’s novel. This letter sees Cibber exasperated at the possibility of having to wait for the next instalment of *Clarissa*. He accuses Richardson of making him wait, and speaks of *Clarissa* as if he knows her, as if she were real rather than fictional. It is clear from the language in Cibber’s letter that he is fanatical about the novel as he demands that Richardson should indulge him with the next section.

Even though the communication between Cibber and Richardson is one-sided, Richardson does refer to him in letters to Aaron Hill, Susanna Highmore and Edward Young, for example. Eaves and Kimpel tell us that Cibber was an ‘admirer’ of Richardson who, in turn, tended to ‘make fun of’ him; a sad thought when we consider that even of Christmas Day 1750, Cibber was thinking of and writing to him:

⁸⁰ Barbauld, III. There are twenty-one named characters in this drawing, including Dr. Johnson, David Garrick, Speaker Onslow, the Duchess of Norfolk, the Bishop of Salisbury, Lord Harcourt, Colley Cibber, the Earl of Chatham, Lady Lincoln, and Richardson.

⁸¹ Barbauld, II, 172-173.

Sir, Though Death has been cooling his heels at my door these three weeks, I have not had time to see him again. The daily conversation of my friends has kept me so agreeably alive, that I have not passed my time better a great while. If you have a mind to make one among us, I will order Death to come another day. To be serious, I long to see you, and hope you will take the first opportunity: and so with us merry a Christmas, as merry a new year, as your heart can hope for, I am

Your real Friend and Servant,
C. Cibber.⁸²

Margaret Collier

Margaret Collier's contribution to Barbauld's edition begins after her sister's death. Jane Collier died in 1755 and shortly that after Margaret Collier had moved to Ryde on the Isle of Wight where she lived with an old couple of 'low station'.⁸³ Margaret Collier epitomises the eighteenth century idea of female sensibility in her letters to Richardson. She is humble and grateful, and whilst her move to Ryde must have occasioned difficulties for her, her letters are largely optimistic and chatty, albeit tinged with a hint of melancholia. After thanking Richardson for the gift he had sent her, the first letter informs him that she has had visitors – Mrs. Roberts and her daughters – and that they had planned a trip around the Isle of Wight which would have provided her with more news for him. However, due to bad weather the trip was cancelled. She includes a verse from a poem 'which in a few expressive words, gives a better account of this sweet country, than I could in a hundred.'⁸⁴ Collier is anxious about the weather as she is certain that her guests will soon depart as winter approaches, but she is quick to point out that she is satisfied when in the company of her 'old folks' and claims that 'I hardly ever met with more simplicity and good sense' and 'it is with [...] pleasure that I sit [...] and hear the discourse and gossippings [sic] of the day.'⁸⁵ This first letter provides Richardson with all the information required for him to make further, more substantial, gifts of charity to his correspondent. In the letter she describes her

⁸² Eaves and Kimpel, p. 181.

⁸³ Barbauld, II, 74.

⁸⁴ Barbauld, II, 73.

⁸⁵ Barbauld, II, 74.

accommodation and discusses her feelings about it after her friend, Mrs. Roberts, had expressed such concern and pity:

Mrs. Roberts says, when she sees me in my very poor house, sitting on my earthen floor, eating my dinner out of a platter, and my poor bed-chamber without any door on it, and a little window peeping out from under the thatch, bare walls, and every thing suitably poor, that under this humble roof I can have no proud thoughts, but must have killed every grain of worldly pride and vanity, before I could sit down contented in such a place. I was forced to make a great slaughter and lay about me prodigiously, before I could conquer those bitter enemies to peace and humility called passions; but now I think and hope they all lie dead in heaps at several places in London and elsewhere; and I brought down nothing with me but a bundle of mortifications; or, to speak more seriously, a thorough and humble acquiescence to the Divine will, and an earnest desire, with patience, resignation, and serenity of mind, to work out my salvation as soon as it will please God to release me; perhaps a little impatience still remains, which tempts me to add “the sooner the better;” and Madame Maintenon’s words, in a letter of her’s, occur to me, where she says, “It is high time to die; why should I stay any longer in this world; I have nothing to do in it; and it is generally business and ambitious views, that make us fond of staying here.”⁸⁶

Collier makes her situation known to Richardson, which perhaps prompts his later offer of assistance. The letter mixes hope and an acceptance of her fate, with a suggestion of enjoyment at her new station in life. Richardson would have been impressed by Collier’s fortitude, and been lured in by the assorted contents of this letter. Again he would be able to adopt a position of giver over one of his correspondents.

Even though the letter continues, it is Richardson’s reply that is interesting. He dates his letter 24 December 1755 and apologises for his slow response; he has ‘been immersed in bricks, mortar, plasterers’ and carpenters’ work all the summer’, and this is the first chance he has had to reply. He asks for further information about the trip that she went on with Mrs. Roberts and her daughters, and he enquires about how she is feeling now that they have left her. Richardson

⁸⁶ Barbauld, II, 76-77.

injects positivity into Margaret Collier's situation by asserting how happy she must be now that she has accepted her lot and calmed her passions, and as for 'Your old couple, methinks I love them.'⁸⁷ Richardson's letter alone, truly is a gift, as it is filled with encouraging and affirming dialogue, with such claims as 'I always loved you; but never so well as since I have had the favour of your last letter', and he continues with a discussion about the virtues of the female mind, and how women have to be as responsible for their own genius as the men who try to suppress them have to be for their own arrogance.⁸⁸ The real gift comes right at the end of the letter when Richardson picks up on Margaret Collier's indirect request for aid:

But what shall we do for a door to your apartment this cold weather? Cannot you find a way to draw upon me, payable at sight, for five guineas? Oblige me, my dear Miss Collier, in the grant of this request. – The promissory note I annex. [Barbauld footnotes '*A note of five guineas.']⁸⁹

Margaret Collier's reply flies back to Richardson within a week of the date of his letter. Dated 31 December 1755, Collier's letter is unequivocally appreciative, but apologetic at the same time. She is embarrassed and ashamed that the letter she sent Richardson could prompt him to send her money; she asks if she can send it back to him but does not send it with this letter as she wants to wait for his permission before doing so, but she adds a delicate touch of humour and familiarity to the plea by suggesting that:

if I was just now with you, I would watch for an opportunity when your back was towards me, and slip it into your coat pocket unobserved, not daring to stand your looks on this sly trick, least there should be the smallest degree of displeasure or severity towards me, which, if I should ever be so unfortunate as to give just occasion for, would give me more real concern than you can well imagine: nay, believe me, Sir, more concern coming from you, than from any one person *now* in this world. There are no bounds, my dear Sir, to your goodness and generosity! *Ought I* not set the bounds? Or

⁸⁷ Barbauld, II, 80-81.

⁸⁸ Barbauld, II, 81.

⁸⁹ Barbauld, II, 84.

shall I not appear, and indeed be in reality, perfectly rapacious: yet don't I know that your greatest pleasure and happiness is in doing acts of benevolence and kindness towards others, and shall I disappoint and rob you of this darling pleasure in one instance? In short, you must have your own munificent and noble spirit gratified if you please.⁹⁰

Collier continues to extol Richardson's virtues, assuring him that until she hears back from him, she will not 'make use of the note.'⁹¹ There is a child-like quality to this letter which continues for a further five pages with more thanks to Richardson for his support and encouragement on the subject of enjoying her life while she awaits her 'appointed time', and she reprimands herself for considering in the first place that she might have had ambitions, 'vain hopes and passions.'⁹² Collier is hopeful and has found contentment with her lot for she has 'cheerfulness and good spirits', which was absent from her previous life in London.⁹³ She entertains herself, and her elderly companions, by reading *Clarissa* to them, which they wholeheartedly enjoy, never having read it or even heard of it before. She delights in telling Richardson that he 'cannot imagine what a new entertainment it is [...] to hear the remarks, and odd observations they make, and this from minds so innocent and ignorant of the world as they seem.'⁹⁴ Collier closes her letter after discussing the comments from Richardson's last letter on female geniuses, then enquiring after her friend Mrs. B, and briefly passing comment on the earthquake that had occurred in Lisbon.⁹⁵

Richardson, in his last known letter to Margaret Collier, replies on 5 January 1756 with a resolute answer to her earlier request to return the money that he had sent her:

I am sorry my dear Miss Collier had the thought of returning the note she mentions, unused. Give me not, Madam, the mortification: I hope you will not, and in that hope, will say no more on the subject.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Barbauld, II, 85-86.

⁹¹ Barbauld, II, 86.

⁹² Barbauld, II, 87.

⁹³ Barbauld, II, 88.

⁹⁴ Barbauld, II, 89.

⁹⁵ Barbauld, II, 91.

⁹⁶ Barbauld, II, 92.

Margaret Collier's last known communication with Richardson was on 4 February 1757 and she apologises for not having written sooner, but she simply had nothing to say. The tone of the letter is much the same as the others with Collier discussing her 'lot', and describing her various activities.⁹⁷ She reports to Richardson that her existence is much like living 'in a nunnery. Sometimes, for a fortnight together, I do not see a soul but those within our walls', but she is certain that she can learn more about 'contentedness, which is none of the least of Christian virtues' from her elderly companions.⁹⁸ Collier touchingly informs Richardson that the business of her 'old folks' is beginning to fail as younger people are moving in and taking over.⁹⁹ She and her companions recognise that they are not at fault, but that they are just ageing. They bear no malice toward the youngsters that are taking over from them. Collier's letter ends with a short paragraph on how expensive the island has become, claiming that it 'is also dearer here than it was ever known in the memory of the oldest people in the Isle of Wight.'¹⁰⁰

The relationships formed between Richardson, Sarah Fielding and the Collier sisters shows Richardson as a father figure to some, a literary advisor to others and an icon to them all. He delighted in being able to offer them gifts of advice, praise and money, his return being unerring high regard, immeasurable praise and superior positioning.

Sarah Fielding

Sarah Fielding, the younger sister of Richardson's nemesis Henry Fielding, appears in her letters as jolly, confident and witty. According to Eaves and Kimpel's record they were writing to one another between January 1749 and January 1757, but there are only a small number letters. The first letter that we see in Barbauld's edition from Sarah Fielding is dated 8 January 1748-9 and opens by thanking Richardson, on behalf of herself and one of the Collier sisters, for the letters that he had sent them.¹⁰¹ She relates the story of a man that she and her

⁹⁷ Barbauld, II, 110.

⁹⁸ Barbauld, II, 111.

⁹⁹ Barbauld, II, 111.

¹⁰⁰ Barbauld, II, 112.

¹⁰¹ Barbauld, II, 59.

companion, Miss Collier, had recently encountered who had made disparaging remarks about Richardson giving such ‘*silly women*’ any of his time.¹⁰² Fielding is secure enough in her relationship with Richardson to disregard the man’s comments. The letter eulogises about the merits of Richardson’s ability and, ultimately, his *Clarissa*. It seems likely that Richardson met Sarah Fielding, and the Colliers, when he was composing *Clarissa*, and the correspondence began from there. All three women were great advocates of Richardson’s novel, and Fielding avowedly declares her admiration for the piece:

but when I read of her, I am all sensation; my heart glows; I am overwhelmed; my only vent is tears; and unless tears could mark my thoughts as legibly as ink, I cannot speak half I feel. I become like the Harlowe’s servant, when he spoke not; he could not speak; he looked, he bowed, and withdrew. In short, Sir, no pen but your’s can do justice to *Clarissa*. Often have I reflected on my own vanity in daring but to touch the hem of her garment; and your excuse for both what I have done, and what I have not done, is all the hopes of,

Sir, your ever faithful

Humble Servant,

S. Fielding.¹⁰³

Richardson printed Sarah Fielding’s novel *The Governess* in 1749, and she had also written a serious reply to critics who had published damning commentaries on *Clarissa* in the June and August editions of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*.¹⁰⁴ The second of Sarah Fielding’s letters to appear in Barbauld’s edition is dated some five and a half years later on 6 July 1754, and still contains the same air of confidence and assured intelligence that the first letter possesses. The subject has moved on from *Clarissa* - although she is mentioned - to *Sir Charles Grandison*, and while Fielding is obviously pleased with *Sir Charles*, her tenor is more reserved than the garrulous praise of five years earlier. The final letter included, is dated eleven months later on 26 June 1755, and exhibits something like the chattiness of the first letter; in fact it is more like a note than an epistle as Fielding

¹⁰² Barbauld, II, 59.

¹⁰³ Barbauld, II, 60-61.

¹⁰⁴ Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 202-203. Eaves and Kimpel claim that the objections to *Clarissa* were published in the June and August 1749 editions of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, and that Sarah Fielding anonymously published her defence of the novel, *Remarks on Clarissa*, in January 1749.

tells Richardson that she ‘was in town two days. I sought you out, but you was no where to be found.’¹⁰⁵ Fielding continues her familiarity by informing Richardson that she was unable to search any further for him as there was ‘a pain in my stomach’ that had reminded her of a story that she had heard, of ‘a lady, whose friend said she was very rude and uncivil to go a visiting to her friend, and die whilst she was there.’¹⁰⁶ Barbauld’s inclusion of this letter serves to show the humour that could pass between Richardson and some of his younger female correspondents. By presenting a different side to his personality, it shows that despite his feud with Henry Fielding, he was able to sustain a convivial relationship with his sister. The poetic flourish that follows this informality shows genuine affection for Richardson and his family, with Fielding painting a picture of the perfect family union: an image Anna Barbauld evidently found useful for her construction of Richardson. The included replies from Richardson to Sarah Fielding are dated a year and a half later (7 December 1756 and 17 January 1757) than her last letter to him, and there is only one extant letter between them (Fielding is the author) during this time that is listed by Eaves and Kimpel which has an approximate date of August-November 1756 assigned to it. They correctly explain that it is ‘Dated only ‘Friday’; reference to Parson’s Green puts it after Oct.1754; she is going to Bath – by Dec.1756 she was there.’¹⁰⁷ Fielding and Richardson were most definitely in communication during this time as Richardson opens his first letter (7 December 1756) to her by stating that ‘Your’s of the 4th, my dear Miss Fielding, gives me joy indeed’, and as far as we are able to confirm, there is no existing letter from her with that sort of date on it.¹⁰⁸ The tone of Richardson’s letter is pleasant and its content is mixed. Fielding has met Lady Bradshaigh, but has neglected to mention that she is a friend of Richardson’s, he questions her about this and asks her to be sure to mention their relationship if she should meet Lady Bradshaigh again. Richardson seems to think that Fielding did not mention their friendship out of some kind of intellectual embarrassment, and aims to reassure her:

¹⁰⁵ Barbauld, II, 71.

¹⁰⁶ Barbauld, II, 71.

¹⁰⁷ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 688.

¹⁰⁸ Barbauld, II, 101.

Why did you not tell Lady Bradshaigh, when you saw her at good Mrs. Bowden's, that you were my much-esteemed Sally Fielding, the author of *David Simple*? She knows my opinion of you, and of your writing powers. If again you see the dear lady, make yourself known to her at my request.¹⁰⁹

That Sarah Fielding would be at all intellectually embarrassed is doubtful and uncharacteristic, and it would be far more likely that out of politeness, she was simply not wishing to name-drop. This would never have occurred to Richardson whose vain opinion of himself went largely undeterred. However, we can also glean from the above quote that Richardson, whilst flattering her, held Fielding's talents in high regard. The inevitable discussion about health ensues, with Richardson eventually realising that 'these melancholy particulars' are troublesome and so moves on.¹¹⁰ However, before doing so he informs Fielding that his 'poor friend, Mr. Edwards, on a returned visit to me, is taken very dangerously ill at Parson's-Green.'¹¹¹ Richardson apologises to Fielding for his slow reply to her letter by stating that 'I hate the pen more and more', but entertains himself by reading and 'I have just gone through your two vols. of *Letters*. Have re-perused them with great pleasure, and found many new beauties in them.'¹¹² This comment leads him to the contentious issue of comparing her to her late brother:

What a knowledge of the human heart! Well might a critical judge of writing say, as he did to me, that your late brother's knowledge of it was not (fine writer as he was) comparable to your's. His was but knowledge of the outside of a clock-work machine, while your's was that of all the fine springs and movements inside.¹¹³

Even though Richardson makes an attempt to be respectful to Henry Fielding he cannot resist the opportunity to denounce him one more time, and does so blatantly. He makes a failed attempt to disguise it by flattering his sister, but it can hardly go unnoticed. Richardson finishes the letter with more self-promotion

¹⁰⁹ Barbauld, II, 101.

¹¹⁰ Barbauld, II, 103.

¹¹¹ Barbauld, II, 102.

¹¹² Barbauld, II, 104.

¹¹³ Barbauld, II, 105.

when he tells Fielding of a good lady he knows in Bath that she should visit if she has time. Whilst making this recommendation Richardson suggests to Sarah Fielding that if the conversation falters, then ‘talk to her of me’.¹¹⁴ In his second letter, dated some six weeks later on the 17 January 1757, it is evident that Sarah Fielding visited the lady (Mrs. Duperre) that Richardson recommended, and he provides further evidence that he and Sarah Fielding were in frequent contact because he thanks her for ‘your excellent letter of the 21st of December’.¹¹⁵ Richardson tells of the deaths of Thomas Edwards and Margaret Dutton, both had died within two weeks of one another whilst staying at Parson’s Green; three of Richardson’s daughters and a niece were also ill there at the time. Richardson reports that his ‘Good wife [...] behaved throughout the whole trial like an angel’, and that she and ‘three nurses’ had cared for them all.¹¹⁶ Richardson informs Fielding that as a result of this ‘melancholy time’ his ‘nerves have suffered’, but stresses that ‘Our friends departed were worthy of all our cares [...], we acted as persons in the way of our duty.’¹¹⁷ His family members recovered their health. Eventually Richardson enquires after his friend and hopes that she is ‘amended in [...] health and spirits’, and asks if she has been able to engage in any of the ‘plans you had consulted me upon.’¹¹⁸ He offers his services to her, as well as some advice on a potential second edition of *The Cry*, which she and Jane Collier had collaborated on in 1754. Richardson tells Fielding that he ‘cannot bear that a piece [*The Cry*] which has so much merit and novelty of design in it, should slide into oblivion.’¹¹⁹ Before signing off his letter he again offers his services to her, and asks her to pass on ‘happy returns of the season’ to his relations in Bath who he has not heard from for a while.¹²⁰

Jane Collier

Jane Collier displays an air of unafraid politeness in her letters, she is thorough and interested, competent and engaging, and self-assuredly offers her point of view to Richardson.

¹¹⁴ Barbauld, II, 105.

¹¹⁵ Barbauld, II, 106.

¹¹⁶ Barbauld, II, 107.

¹¹⁷ Barbauld, II, 107.

¹¹⁸ Barbauld, II, 108.

¹¹⁹ Barbauld, II, 108-109.

¹²⁰ Barbauld, II, 109.

In a letter, dated 13 April 1749, from Jane Collier to Richardson she dwells upon *Clarissa*, perhaps more specifically upon Lovelace. Collier enjoys reporting to Richardson by 'tell[ing] you everything I hear concerning *Clarissa*'.¹²¹ She is thoroughly perplexed by the abundance of people who adore Lovelace, and feels compelled to offer 'something like an answer', so she decides to describe a woman that has expressed such a fondness for Lovelace, and thinks that by doing so it will go some way toward offering an explanation.¹²² Surprisingly, the rest of Collier's letter is gossip as she tells the tale of a woman who 'lived as a mistress [...] for many years, and proved herself [...] so in a court of justice, in order to recover some money for a child she had by' him.¹²³ The passage informs Richardson that the woman then met a different man, this time a lord, with whom she lived for some time, and eventually married. The woman in Collier's story, after several suicide attempts, is now considered to be 'a woman of taste, and a perfect judge of delicacy'.¹²⁴ Collier muses over whether 'her husband ever read your books, and whether he attended to your description of Belton, and his Thomasine!'¹²⁵ Not only is Collier comparing the realistic nature of Richardson's fiction to that of a true story, but she is advocating his writing as a means of instruction.

William Warburton

Barbauld has included only one letter from Warburton in her edition (28 December 1742). Richardson has sent Warburton a gift which he has, at last, received. Warburton expresses his gratitude for the 'fine edition of your excellent work' (*Pamela*) and tells Richardson that 'I have so true an esteem for you, that you may depend on any thing in my power, that you think may be of any service to you.'¹²⁶ Warburton, in discussion with Alexander Pope, has decided to suggest that Richardson should turn *Pamela in High-Life* into a satire on modern day life,

¹²¹ Barbauld, II, 66.

¹²² Barbauld, II, 66.

¹²³ Barbauld, II, 67.

¹²⁴ Barbauld, II, 67.

¹²⁵ Barbauld, II, 67-68.

¹²⁶ Barbauld, I, 133-134. Richardson and Warburton argued in 1753, after a misunderstanding over a gift that Richardson had given to Warburton's wife. Their relationship was also compromised by the feud between Warburton and Richardson's friend Thomas Edwards (see Barbauld, III, 60, and Eaves and Kimpel, p. 195). Richardson's good friend, Aaron Hill, had also come under attack from Warburton and his friend Alexander Pope (Hill is thought to be represented in Pope's *Dunciad*).

and suggests that they discuss the idea ‘when I have the pleasure of seeing you in town, we will talk over this matter at large’.¹²⁷ Richardson rejects their proposal. The letter is short and serves as a reminder to Richardson’s new nineteenth century audience that he knew people, and had friends, of renown who appreciated and valued him and his work.

John Duncombe

John Duncombe was the son of William Duncombe, a friend and correspondent of Richardson. William Duncombe was a retired gentleman of a similar age to Richardson, and had once worked for the Navy Office. John Duncombe was born in 1729 and became a clergyman after a studying at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge.¹²⁸

The letters between Richardson and John Duncombe date from 15 October 1751 to 5 June 1757.¹²⁹ Duncombe’s letters are articulate and polite, charming and apparently sincere. In his first letter to Richardson (15 October 1751) he is overjoyed that his mentor wishes to hear from him and, despite all of the distractions that life at Cambridge has, nothing ‘could have prevented me from immediately transmitting a sincere specimen of my regard for Mr. Richardson’.¹³⁰ Duncombe’s initial interest is Richardson’s health, but before long he is enquiring after ‘your fair Italian’ (Clementina in *Sir Charles Grandison*) whom he has often ‘grieved for’.¹³¹ As with Susanna Highmore and Hester Mulso, Duncombe behaves as if the characters in the novel are real. He is certain that ‘Emily [...] and Harriet too, will readily forgive me, if at present I am unmindful of them’, but ‘the wound which Clementina so lately gave me, [...] bleeds anew.’¹³²

¹²⁷ Barbauld, I, 135.

¹²⁸ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 341.

¹²⁹ There is a facsimile of a letter dated 14 July 1757 to be found at the back of volume VI of Barbauld’s work. This facsimile, according to Eaves and Kimpel, is the last existing letter between the two men, and is written in Richardson’s hand (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 692). Other facsimiles found at the back of volume VI of Barbauld’s edition are all to Richardson, and are from Mr. James Harris (of Salisbury); Dr. Warburton; Colley Cibber; David Garrick; Rev. James Harvey; Dr. Edward Young – Barbauld’s selected facsimiles are all from men who were eminent in their fields.

¹³⁰ Barbauld, II, 271.

¹³¹ Barbauld, II, 272.

¹³² Barbauld, II, 272.

The letter informs us that Duncombe has been socialising at Cambridge, and has already encountered some people that Richardson is acquainted with. Duncombe is eager to introduce Richardson to some of his new fans:

I had the pleasure, the other night, of meeting Mr. Lobb [Richardson's godson], who seems to be a modest, amiable youth [...]. Mr. Graham is not at Cambridge; but his brother is, who is also very ingenious, and expresses a great desire to be acquainted with you, as he already thoroughly is with your writings. [...]. The short epigram which Mr. Graham sent you was wrote by himself, and is much liked here, as we think it partakes of the sublime simplicity of the ancients.

Mr. Sharp desires to be remembered to you; and often mentions to me, with pleasure the kind and indeed sumptuous entertainment we met with at North End, as you so agreeably

_____ mingled with the friendly bowl,
The feast of reason, and the flow of soul.¹³³

It is evident that Richardson is very much a topic of conversation among the young scholars up at Cambridge, perhaps even a house-hold name. To all intents and purposes it would seem that to talk of Richardson is to meet upon common ground, to immediately have something to discuss and have in common with a new acquaintance. Richardson is a useful tool with which to strike up conversation, and even better if you are acquainted with him.

A month later Duncombe is writing in reply to a letter he had received from Richardson. The letter serves to show the calibre of some of Richardson's correspondents as Duncombe reflects on Lord Orrery's work on Swift, which he compares to 'those of Cicero'.¹³⁴ In a previous letter Richardson has obviously mentioned some of the struggles he was having with the composition of his new work (*Sir Charles Grandison*), and Duncombe suggests that Richardson should 'for God's sake, throw away your pen.'¹³⁵

Richardson's reply, more of a note than a letter, comes a month later on 12 December 1751, and opens with an apology for its delay by stating that 'Harriet has suffered from my avocations. I have lost my thread, and know not where to

¹³³ Barbauld, II, 273-274.

¹³⁴ Barbauld, II, 276.

¹³⁵ Barbauld, II, 277.

find it.’¹³⁶ In three short paragraphs – nineteen lines in total – Richardson updates Duncombe on friends, weddings and acquaintances, before informing him of a work – ‘The Universal History, from the Earliest Accounts of Time’ – that he is involved with.¹³⁷

The next letter that Barbauld has selected from John Duncombe to Richardson arrives from Sandwich in Kent and is dated 16 August 1754.¹³⁸ His letter comes with a sonnet which he asks Richardson to pass on to Thomas Edwards if he considers it to be worthy enough. Duncombe tells Richardson that ‘it speaks my real thoughts’ which are a result of ‘the genius and goodness of heart that appears in all the writings of Mr. Edwards.’¹³⁹ The letter goes on to enquire about whether Richardson has decided upon a location for his ‘rural residence’, and he strongly opposes Finchley Common as a possible abode, claiming that ‘if there you dwell, I foresee death and destruction in your next work; and bitter will be the complaints of all your fair readers.’¹⁴⁰ According to Duncombe, the authors’ ‘thoughts and writings’ are greatly influenced by our surroundings, and therefore ‘rapes, robberies, and murders, must ensue’ if Richardson were to locate to Finchley.¹⁴¹ Duncombe concludes with a warm paragraph of abundant praise:

Wherever you settle, wherever you pitch your tent, may
good angels continually guard it with healing in their
wings; for I will boldly pronounce that, with a heart like
your’s, if you have health, you cannot be unhappy. In all
your future works (if any such are yet in store) you shall
always have the good wishes of all your former readers;
you shall always have the hearty thanks of,

Dear Sir,
your affectionate humble Servant,
J. DUNCOMBE.

¹³⁶ Barbauld, II, 278.

¹³⁷ Barbauld, II, 279.

¹³⁸ Barbauld, II, 294.

¹³⁹ Barbauld, II, 294. The sonnet in question, *To Thomas Edwards, Esq* (1754), asks Edwards to extend himself by abandoning the traditional, and unfashionable, sonnet for something more ambitious.

¹⁴⁰ Barbauld, II, 295.

¹⁴¹ Barbauld, II, 295. Finchley Common was known in the eighteenth century as a breeding ground for highwaymen.

Duncombe's letter shows an interested concern in Richardson and the potential influences that could inform his writing. He is at once appropriately complimentary, and moderately flattering of him.

Richardson's reply, dated 24 August 1754, comes just a week after Duncombe's letter and is a mixture of terse reaction and passive aggressive familiarity. Richardson begins by informing Duncombe, in no uncertain terms, that the sonnet he sent will not be passed onto Edwards by him, and he discloses that he will explain his reasons to Duncombe when he sees him.

Richardson's letter is odd. He has been affronted by Duncombe's letter and takes the opportunity to chastise him for it. He likes the initial discussion where Duncombe flatters him, explaining that 'Your first reason for it [Duncombe's interest in the location of Richardson's country home] is a very obliging one. You do me the high honour of comparing me to a patriarch'.¹⁴² However, he then claims that Duncombe implies that should he and his family choose to move to Finchley, then his friends will desert them, and no-one will visit. Richardson asserts that he has never drawn on his surroundings as a means of developing a narrative, and that this is largely inconsequential anyway as he has 'I think, laid down the pen for ever, with a view to the public eye.'¹⁴³ As soon as Richardson has made his point, his mood changes and he becomes the jolly and convivial paternal presence that is often present in his letters to his younger fans. He announces that 'this is now no question', because he has chosen Parsons Green as his country retreat.¹⁴⁴ The sensitive nature of Richardson's response is controlling and pedantic, and only serves to put and keep Duncombe in his place as a correspondent and fan of Richardson; it is made clear that it is not the other way round. The letter closes in the hope that Richardson will soon see 'his worthy Messrs. Duncombe, senior and junior'.¹⁴⁵

Barbauld's final selection from the Richardson-Duncombe letters is dated 5 June 1757. Richardson is replying to a request on behalf of a female associate of Duncombe's. Essentially, Richardson is assuming the role of an agony-aunt, by offering advice to an unnamed woman who is experiencing serious marital difficulties. The letter lasts eight pages and Richardson states early on that 'the

¹⁴² Barbauld, II, 297.

¹⁴³ Barbauld, II, 298.

¹⁴⁴ Barbauld, II, 298.

¹⁴⁵ Barbauld, II, 299.

lady is determined to be guided by my advice', an arduous task which 'I will not, as I justly might, plead both incapacity and indisposition, to excuse myself from'.¹⁴⁶ Richardson quickly embraces the challenge and revels in the opportunity to soliloquize about the complexities and challenges of marital *mêlée*. He encompasses every possible perspective, offering the lady a variety of possibilities as well as detailed advice on how to conduct and protect herself throughout her ordeal. Richardson's main concern is that the woman becomes as 'noble an example to her sex' as possible.¹⁴⁷ He offers her some strict guidelines which will assist in the realisation of this ambition: if she is able to maintain 'lenity and gentleness' throughout this turbulent time, and engineer a relationship whereby her estranged husband would wish to be in communication with her, then this would be the most favourable outcome.¹⁴⁸ Richardson claims that he had not intended to write for so long, as his 'nervous disorders' usually prevent him from doing so, but he feels that the words he has offered should only provide a basis from which to build.¹⁴⁹ The influence of his novels has presented Richardson with a different type of opportunity. It is clear from Duncombe's request that sections of the public are viewing him as some kind of sensibility oracle, as someone who can listen and then respond to them with clear and dignified advice.

William Strahan

To discuss the correspondence between Richardson and William Strahan would be to exaggerate the situation as it is a very one-sided affair. So far as we know there are no existing manuscript letters from Richardson to Strahan, and only seven are cited in Barbauld's first volume.¹⁵⁰ The letters from William Strahan came in a flourish between the 17 August 1749 and the October 5 of the same year. Strahan, a fellow printer who lived and worked close to Richardson, was helped by him in his early days, and the letters seem to show that he never forgot the acts of kindness that Richardson showed him. The Strahan letters are curious, and the lack of replies from Richardson are nothing if not conspicuous in their absence. Both were tradesmen but Richardson wanted to ally himself with

¹⁴⁶ Barbauld, II, 300.

¹⁴⁷ Barbauld, II, 306.

¹⁴⁸ Barbauld, II, 306.

¹⁴⁹ Barbauld, II, 307.

¹⁵⁰ Eaves and Kimpel confirm this on page 647 of their biography of Richardson.

gentlemen, ladies and those he considered to be in the upper echelons of society; he wanted his legacy to be associated with his writings, and not his printing, which makes the presence of the Strahan letters difficult to explain, other than to deduce that they exist there merely as another way of cataloguing Richardson as a loyal and virtuous hero, as well as a victim of his own generosity (see footnote 69).

Strahan writes from Edinburgh whilst on a journey to Scotland in 1749, reporting in one of the letters, dated 16 September 1749, that his wife had given birth to a son and they proposed ‘to name it Samuel, after you; to make him, as it were, a living monument of your friendship’; what bigger gift could anyone possibly ask for than a breathing testament to a person’s goodness.¹⁵¹ Eaves and Kimpel are sceptical about whether this actually happened.¹⁵² Strahan mentions receiving a ‘kind epistle’ from Richardson, but there is no way of confirming this due to the lack of extant manuscripts.¹⁵³ The inclusion of these letters in Barbauld’s edition again offers an insight into what she is attempting to construct for Richardson. Strahan’s letters are, once again, full of praise for her subject, and at certain points border on obsessive. In the second letter, dated 24 August 1749, Strahan compiles a list of questions to show Richardson just how much he is on his mind:

everything I see puts me in mind of you. – What would Mr. Richardson think of this? – Here is a room for his praise; - and here for his censure: - this would raise his compassion; this his indignation; this would touch his benevolent heart with joy; and here he would exercise his charity; this man’s solid sense would delight him; the ladies would, in general, charm him; and the honest prejudices of many, in favour of their native country, would make him smile. These, and many other such-like thoughts often occur to me, so that I am oftener in your company than you imagine.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Barbauld, I, 150.

¹⁵² Eaves and Kimpel, p. 161. Eaves and Kimpel also discuss the ‘serious quarrel between the two men’, but for the purposes of this thesis there is little point in detailing the Richardson-Strahan feud. Suffice to say that Richardson had discovered, but there is little extant proof, that Strahan was, after a prolonged friendship of high regard and support, trying to undercut Richardson with a prospective client whom he had met through Richardson. The event and, for Richardson, their friendship, was supposedly underhand and riddled with deceit. Strahan also refers to a letter he received from Richardson in a letter dated 21 September 1749 (Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 503-504).

¹⁵³ Barbauld, I, 148.

¹⁵⁴ Barbauld, I, 139-140.

The Strahan letters sound deliberate and contrived, but serve their purpose, particularly when it comes to Richardson's legacy, or at least Barbauld's version of it. Barbauld chooses to omit the letter to Erasmus Reich where Richardson reports that he has discovered that he has a false friend and that he blames him for enhancing his illnesses; that said friend was William Strahan.¹⁵⁵

The Strahan letters, for example, differ from Hill's because they include information about industry and pastoral development as well as being filled with information about his visits to Scotland's burgeoning cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Stirling and St. Andrews. Hill's letters are more philosophical and erudite in nature, but there are some similarities which are shared among all of Richardson's correspondents. Strahan's letters, as with others, are steeped in obsequiousness, and what better gift is there to give Richardson than flattery. From the first letter where he tells Richardson that 'There are sensible men in plenty; though such as Mr. R. are rarely found anywhere', we are able to ascertain why Barbauld included him.¹⁵⁶ The flattery continues throughout as Strahan reports that 'I have nothing to do but go from feast to feast, the manners of the better part of this country bearing a very near resemblance to those of North End', and he is eager to impress Richardson when he enters into the realm of romantic thought by admitting that 'When I sit down to write to you, I present you before my eyes, with a smile'.¹⁵⁷ Barbauld builds Richardson up time and time again, and the contents found within Strahan's letters assist her: 'Allow me [...] to acknowledge, (and I do it with [...] gratitude) the great honour you have done me, in admitting me to such a share of your conversation and friendship'.¹⁵⁸

Thomas Edwards

Thomas Edwards was a descendant of the Welsh gentry; an educated gentleman – though there is some debate as to where his education took place – who resided at Turrick, near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire.¹⁵⁹ After the death of

¹⁵⁵ The letter to Erasmus Reich is dated 2 April 1757.

¹⁵⁶ Barbauld, I, 137.

¹⁵⁷ Barbauld, I, 140 and 147.

¹⁵⁸ Barbauld, I, 149.

¹⁵⁹ Biographies by John Nichols (1780), Isaac Reed (1782), Alexander Chalmers (1812), and John A. Dussinger (2008) offer different information on Edwards's schooling, with Nichols and Reed claiming that he attended Eton and Cambridge, and the two latter biographers who find no proof of such claims.

his father, Edwards inherited a substantial estate allowing him to live in semi-secluded retirement, where he was able to concentrate his efforts on his passion for Shakespeare and the art of sonnet writing.¹⁶⁰ Richardson and Edwards became associates through a mutual friend, George Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons, and remained life-long correspondents. Their extant correspondence begins in 1748 and ends on 19 October 1756, shortly before Edwards's death in 1757.¹⁶¹ For this thesis it is not possible to include a discussion of all of the Richardson-Edwards letters, and I have therefore selected some of those which contain information that best serves this thesis.

Anna Barbauld's selection is made up of forty-one letters, and most of the correspondence represented there is taken up with the Edwards-Warburton feud, and the issues involved in it.¹⁶² Her first selected letter is dated 26 January 1749, and is steeped in obsequiousness. Edwards is enraptured by Richardson's ability to write such a 'charming performance' in *Clarissa*, and he expresses his intention to use the novel as 'a touchstone by which I shall try the hearts of my acquaintance, and judge which of them are true standard.'¹⁶³ Edwards makes references to Shakespeare throughout this first letter, and tells Richardson that 'Whether it be a milkiness of blood in me, as Shakespeare calls it [...] I never felt so much distress [...] as I have done for that dear girl [Clarissa].'¹⁶⁴ He further extols Richardson's abilities by claiming that 'this excellent work' would certainly have made an impression on London, and again refers to Shakespeare by comparing the reception in London of *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Benedict and Beatrice*, to that of *Clarissa*.¹⁶⁵ For Edwards, *Clarissa* had 'tamed and humanized hearts that before were not so very sensible', but is also eager to point out that despite this Richardson should be fully aware of the capriciousness of the town:

¹⁶⁰ Edwards was the author of *Canons of Criticism* (1748), and *An Account of the Trial of the Letter Y, alias Y* (1753), among other various pamphlets and a multitude of sonnets. His feud with William Warburton – the men argued first argued about Warburton's approach to Shakespeare in 1741 and continued throughout their lives – weaves its way through his correspondence with Richardson.

¹⁶¹ Eaves and Kimpel tell us that the first extant manuscript letter between the two men is dated 2 December 1748 (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 643), Barbauld's selection begins with the next extant letter dated 26 January 1749 Barbauld, III, 1), and ends with a letter dated 12 July 1756. Edwards died at Richardson's country house (Parsons Green) on 3 January 1757.

¹⁶² Another main theme which runs through their correspondence is that of editing, and the power of the bookseller.

¹⁶³ Barbauld, III, 3. Edwards's decision to utilize *Clarissa* as a guide by which to assess his relationships is identical to the one adopted by Lady Bradshaigh's (see chapter 4).

¹⁶⁴ Barbauld, III, 1.

¹⁶⁵ Barbauld, III, 2.

he is sure that Richardson realises that ‘there will be some who cannot relish her beauties’ no matter how close to heaven he has deftly drawn her.¹⁶⁶ Edwards makes it his duty to ‘defend the honour of Clarissa’, and wishes Richardson a deserving and profitable time by her.¹⁶⁷

Barbauld leaves a gap of approximately a year before introducing the next letter – this time from Richardson to Edwards – and this begins a comparatively quick exchange of letters with Edwards replying to Richardson within fifteen days. Richardson’s letter, dated 9 January 1750, is designed to charm Edwards as he compliments his sonnet writing, expresses concern for the durability of their correspondence, and then presents Edwards with a list of people who have been discussing him much ‘to your advantage.’¹⁶⁸

Edwards’s reply is dated 24 January 1750 and begins with a reassurance to Richardson that the geographical distance being imposed upon the two men will not jeopardise their communication:

I should be ashamed of myself if all the waters in the world could wash your friendship from my remembrance. That worthy heart, which all who have the least worth in themselves must value, has made too deep impressions on me to be effaced by time or place, - impressions which will last as long as my being. But I have besides many personal obligations to you, which perpetually put me in mind of my benefactor, and you have lately reminded me by a civility which I am quite ashamed of. Why did you give yourself the trouble of printing my lines? But since you have, I will not enjoy alone the benefit of your trouble. I have sent a copy to the Speaker, to put under his print of you; and I design one for Mr. Highmore, who I take it for granted has one of those prints.¹⁶⁹

Richardson’s earlier concern about their ongoing correspondence is placated here by Edwards’s poetical reassurance. Even though Richardson’s concern takes up just once sentence (‘Don’t let me call the last water you shall pass in your way

¹⁶⁶ Barbauld, III, 2.

¹⁶⁷ Barbauld, III, 3.

¹⁶⁸ Barbauld, III, 4. The sonnet mentioned by Richardson in this letter was eventually printed with his portrait attached to it. It was included in the third edition of *Clarissa* but, much to Edwards’s disappointment, it was presented anonymously without Edwards’s name attached to it. When Edwards asked Richardson about the anonymity of the sonnet writer, Richardson simply replied that he did not dare to ask Edwards, and that in any case, anyone who knew Edwards’s work would recognise it as his.

¹⁶⁹ Barbauld, III, 5-6.

thither Lethe.’) it is powerful enough to incite an elaborate reply from Edwards, who also steels the opportunity to circulate his work at Richardson’s expense.¹⁷⁰ Edwards’s letter is interrupted for three days by a visit that he has had to make, and he returns to it with even more congeniality. Richardson has introduced Edwards to other correspondents of his, which presents Edwards with the opportunity to reference another of Richardson’s novels: *Sir Charles Grandison*. According to Edwards the conversations that he shared at these introductions had reminded him of one of Richardson’s female characters (Harriet Byron), and Edwards is quick to mention that he is eager to hear more of her. However, he has concerns over something that Richardson has written for her, and expresses his fear at mentioning it, but then carries on regardless.¹⁷¹

Richardson’s letter of the 30 December 1751 shows concern for Edwards’s health after a breakdown in their communication, and he is relieved to hear that it was only a delay in Edwards’s journey that had delayed his writing. Richardson is concerned about ‘the desolateness of Turrick’ and, in the first of many, offers his country home at North-End for Edwards to use as his winter retreat.¹⁷² Richardson’s entire letter is concerned with promoting his home in the hope that Edwards will accept his invitation, and even though Edwards declines, the lengths that Richardson goes to are indefatigable:

Dear Sir, what pleasure would you have given me, could you have prevailed upon yourself to make North-End your London house in the winter; and not to have come nearer the town! All your friends would have come to you there. Glad would they have been to do it. I have a stable for your horses. Your servant would have lain with my gardener near his horses, or in the house. Were my family *down*, I should have room for you. But they are in town; and I have three or four good rooms, any one of which would be at your service, another at your nephew’s, another at your brother’s, whose acquaintance I should be glad to cultivate. With what pleasure should I have come down to you! [...] Bless me, my dear friend, cannot this still be thought of for one month or two of the wintry season? – Order your matters; and try. To me it appears very feasible. And what benefit has a man in being a

¹⁷⁰ Barbauld, III, 4.

¹⁷¹ Barbauld has added a footnote in her edition explaining the circumstances (see Barbauld, III, 8-9).

¹⁷² Barbauld, III, 27.

bachelor, if he cannot choose where he will be, and what he will do? and if he is not as much his friends' man as his own?¹⁷³

Even though Edwards is a gentleman of worthy status, Richardson enjoys being in a position to offer his friend something more than he has: a residence close to London, but far enough out to be considered a country retreat. There are similarities here to Aaron Hill's relationship with Richardson and, once again, we see an interesting dichotomy emerge between an educated gentleman, and an aspirational tradesman.

By 19 February 1752 it is Edwards's turn to show concern at not hearing from Richardson. Edwards glories in the knowledge that he has a famous author as a correspondent, and tells Richardson that due to his lapse in letter-writing he now 'make[s] but a simple figure among your disciples in this neighbourhood, who know that I glory in the honour of your correspondence', and that he is now 'forced to answer that I hope he is well, but I have not heard from him in a long long month.'¹⁷⁴ Even though Edwards begins his letter in a jocular manner, his enjoyment at having a famous correspondent, and his evident decline into being just an ordinary member of the community, has been instigated by Richardson's pedestrian attitude toward their communication. Edwards has not enjoyed having to explain to local residents that he has had no communication with this famous friend for some time. Before moving on to the next subject, Edwards cannot resist one final swipe at Richardson by claiming that if he were well enough, he would love to receive long letters from him, just as others do, and he shamelessly lets Richardson know that 'I much envy some certain ladies on that score'.¹⁷⁵ Within two days Richardson has replied to his friend but pays little attention to the humorous neediness which opened Edwards's previous letter.

In a letter written nine days later (28 February 1752), Edwards at once attends to the subject of Richardson's health. The implication in Richardson's last letter was that, once again, his health was poor, and Edwards is quick to tell him that his health 'is of consequence to so many people', and that all they can do is 'submit

¹⁷³ Barbauld, III, 27-29.

¹⁷⁴ Barbauld, III, 30.

¹⁷⁵ Barbauld, III, 31.

and adore'.¹⁷⁶ As well as mentioning his desire to read more about the heroine of *Sir Charles Grandison* (Harriet Byron), he is honoured to have been mentioned in one of Hester Mulso's odes, and has enclosed a copy of a sonnet that 'has [been] forced from me', which he hopes Richardson will pass on to her.¹⁷⁷ As well as writing her a sonnet, Edwards has proposed a subject for her to write about: Richardson, and requests that Richardson does not interfere with the process. However, if he does then Edwards proposes to 'have the sonnet printed, and hawked about under your window *in terrorem*.'¹⁷⁸ Here we see Edwards fulfilling all the criteria of a devoted and dutiful fan.

In the next letter, dated 16 March 1752, Richardson begins by praising Edwards for apologising for being his correspondent. Richardson is perplexed by this and ensures a continued relationship with his fan by informing him that it is Edwards who does him the honour of being his correspondent. Both men are batting compliments back and forth to one another, and we can deduce from Richardson's reaction that the compliment Edwards obviously set out to pay him was that he was indebted to Richardson for the continuation of such a relationship. The interplay between the two men sees Edwards assuming the role of fan, and Richardson enjoying the position of a famous celebrity who is able to exhibit a deferred self-importance. Richardson has passed on Edwards's aforementioned assignment to Hester Mulso and, again, duly handles the situation with the suitable amount of modesty required for such an occasion: Richardson informs Edwards that he has told Mulso that if she declines the challenge then it is because of the subject rather than her ability.¹⁷⁹

Edwards dates the next letter mid way through it ('Wednesday, March 18th') and again at the end ('March 20, 1752'). The letter is seven and a half pages long and, upon Richardson's request, offers a detailed account of how Edwards spends his time. Richardson has fully engaged with his fan by enquiring after a detailed description of Edwards's pastimes. After sharing his hobbies with Richardson, Edwards informs him that he also passes his time at Turrick by reading and re-reading 'the choicest authors my little library affords', as well as by writing

¹⁷⁶ Barbauld, III, 36.

¹⁷⁷ Barbauld, III, 36-37.

¹⁷⁸ Barbauld, III, 37.

¹⁷⁹ See previous letter (Barbauld, III, 37) where Edwards has set Mulso the task of writing about Richardson.

‘mostly by way of amusement’.¹⁸⁰ Of course Edwards is referring to Richardson, amongst others. There is further discussion of editors, this time in relation to Pope and Milton, and Edwards makes it clear that while he ‘admired him [Pope] as a poet [...] I must own I never had any great opinion of him in any other light’, and he does not see any ‘reason to alter my judgement, from what has appeared of his character since his death.’¹⁸¹ The letter moves from Pope to Warburton, and his general incompetence as an editor.

Barbauld leaves a period of nine months before adding her next selected letter. During this time there was writing activity between the two men, with a total of nine recorded letters (six from Edwards to Richardson, and three from Richardson to Edwards).¹⁸² Written from London on 23 December 1752, Richardson’s letter to Edwards covers barely two pages of Barbauld’s text, and its content is largely concerned with a significant fire that had occurred at Richardson’s business premises in Salisbury-Court.¹⁸³ Edwards replies to this letter immediately, and on New Year’s Day 1753 he can think of no better activity than writing to Richardson.

The next letter included by Barbauld is, again, from Edwards to Richardson and is dated two months after the previous entry. Writing from Turrick on 5 March 1753, Thomas Edwards is overjoyed to hear that all of their mutual friends are well and that they remember him. He is referring to other members of the group that Richardson has brought together. This network of correspondents forms the basis of Richardson’s fan club.

As Barbauld’s edition progresses, the letters between Richardson and Edwards become repetitive, with endless references to Warburton. There are, however, the occasional references to ‘one of your pretty disciples in my neighbourhood, who is a great admirer of *Clarissa*, and has the author’s portrait in her closet’, which is inserted into a letter in memory of *Pamela*, and as a means of feeding Richardson’s ego.¹⁸⁴ We also witness Richardson informing Edwards that

¹⁸⁰ Barbauld, III, 42.

¹⁸¹ Barbauld, III, 43.

¹⁸² Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 662-664. The excluded letters from Edwards to Richardson are dated 24 June 1752, 9 July 1752, 20 August 1752, 29 September 1752, 23 October 1752 and 15 December 1752. Likewise, the excluded letters from Richardson to Edwards are dated 28 June 1752, 21 August 1752 and 25 October 1752.

¹⁸³ Refer to Barbauld, III, 48-50 for Richardson’s description of the circumstances surrounding the fire.

¹⁸⁴ Barbauld, III, 57.

Johnson is 'writing a Dictionary, that will be an attempt to bring the English language to somewhat of a standard.'¹⁸⁵ Perhaps the next significant event recorded within this correspondence is the Irish piracy debacle of *Sir Charles Grandison*. In a letter dated 14 September 1753 Edwards directly attacks the 'execrable rapparees' that have damaged his associate.¹⁸⁶

Thomas Edwards's letter, dated 28 January 1754, opens with an apology for his delay in writing. Edwards has been away, and has returned to the solitariness of Turrick. On his return he has turned to *Sir Charles Grandison* for company, and this is where he apports the blame for his neglect in writing. Edwards celebrates Richardson for writing the novel, claiming that:

He [Sir Charles] shall be my master; and it will be my own very great fault, if I am not better for his lessons to the last day of my life. God reward you, my dear Mr. Richardson, both here and hereafter, for the most excellent instructions which you have given to the world! You teach us both how to live, and how to die. To live like Sir Charles, and to die like Clarissa, what a full complement of felicity that would be! Accept, my dear friend, my poor but sincerest thanks for the many hours which you have given, and will give me; for I assure you that your works are with me (like the Speaker's roast beef) a standing dish; and though I read them ever so often, I always find something new.

And now will you pardon my vanity if I tell you that I have been suspected by two or three gentlemen (not of Sir Charles's character, you may be assured) of having a hand in this most valuable work? I should have been the meanest of creatures if I had not most explicitly disclaimed the having any share in it, and asserted that you wanted no assistance; but at the same time I own that I could not help being proud of the suspicion.¹⁸⁷

Edwards is, arguably, awarding Richardson the highest of accolades: he is establishing him as the teacher of modern living. The obsequious nature of the statement is filled with gratitude, praise, a modicum of humour, and the admission by Edwards that he wishes he had written it. Edwards's honesty ensures that his

¹⁸⁵ Barbauld, III, 59.

¹⁸⁶ Barbauld, III, 66.

¹⁸⁷ Barbauld, III, 71-72.

correspondent will be pleased with him, perpetuating the cyclical nature of praise and gift-giving that the two men have become bound by.

Once again Richardson's reply is swift as he aims to keep the momentum of his fan mail moving. Within three days, on the 31 January 1754, he has written a gratifying reply to his friend stating his gratitude that a man such as Edwards would think so highly of his work. Richardson goes on to expand his praise of Edwards by saying that 'those unknown friends of yours, who have made me so high a compliment as to suppose that you would have written on some of the subjects' leave him with 'One cause for mortification', and that is that they 'would have selected the best passages or sentiments, and given them to their valued friend at Turrick, and left to the Printer in Salisbury-court a vast heap of the indifferent'.¹⁸⁸ As the letter reaches its conclusion Richardson continues to heap praise upon Edwards by trying to persuade him to publish his work in volumes rather than pamphlets. Richardson is telling Edwards that his work is worthy of something impressive and more permanent than the pamphlet.

Edwards replies to a letter (17 February 1754) from Richardson which has not been included by Barbauld. Edwards's letter informs us that Richardson has agreed to his latest request: the inclusion of a sonnet by, and accredited to, Edwards, in the new publication of *Sir Charles Grandison*.¹⁸⁹ In the letter, dated 1 March 1754, Edwards's delight is palpable, as he tells his friend that:

You have given me, my dear Mr. Richardson, both honour and pleasure, by so kindly indulging in my ambitious desire of appearing to the world as an admirer of your excellent work and the friend of its valuable author. I hope in time your name will be prefixed to these so generally applauded performances; then let mine be subscribed at length to the Sonnets; and so I shall go down to posterity in an advantageous light, and be read by the fair and the good, when pamphlets and pamphlet-like publications are consigned to the grocers and pastry-cooks.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Barbauld, III, 73-74.

¹⁸⁹ In 1751 Edwards had offered Richardson a sonnet to include in a new edition of *Clarissa*, and whilst Richardson had included the sonnet he failed to accredit it to Edwards leaving his correspondent bemused and upset.

¹⁹⁰ Barbauld, III, 78.

Edwards begins to repay Richardson immediately by letting his friend know that he is in the superior position as indulger, and by accepting the inferior role Edwards is almost forced to make a joke of his much-desired intentions, which again renders him indebted to Richardson's superiority. Edwards recognises his need for life after death through literature, but his lack of confidence in his own work means that he has to rely on another's success in order for him to attain his own.

In a letter dated 19 December 1754, from Edwards to Richardson, the primary subject is Edwards's insistence that he remains at home in Turrick for the duration of the winter months. Edwards is content to be at Turrick, not wishing to be 'troublesome' to anyone.¹⁹¹ Edwards reassures Richardson that even though he has come to this decision he will still miss him, and that his only saving grace is that he has begun re-reading his novels which he admires more each time.¹⁹²

On 15 January 1755 Edwards writes a five page letter which opens with New Year greetings to the Richardson family, and special thanks to Richardson for 'alleviating the solitariness of my winter retirement by your kind correspondence!'¹⁹³ Edwards is concerned that he has nothing but thanks to offer his friend in return for such letters because he lives in 'a place where I neither hear nor see any thing new to entertain either myself or others'.¹⁹⁴ Edwards is mildly critical of his urbanite friends who 'do not enough consider, how hungry a countryman is after what passes in the great metropolis.'¹⁹⁵ Predictably, the letter discusses poetry, health, mutual associates, and Warburton, but concludes with a transcribed sentence from Richardson's previous letter in which he has expressed his gratitude to Edwards for his re-reading of *Pamela* and *Clarissa*: "'That Pamela and Clarissa have again obtained the *honour* of my perusal," do you say, my dear Mr. Richardson?'¹⁹⁶ Richardson claims that Edwards has done him a great honour, and Edwards is quick to refute the claim:

I assure you I think it an *honour* to be able to say that I have read, and as long as I have eyes will read, all your

¹⁹¹ Barbauld, III, 102.

¹⁹² Barbauld, III, 102.

¹⁹³ Barbauld, III, 107.

¹⁹⁴ Barbauld, III, 107.

¹⁹⁵ Barbauld, III, 107-108.

¹⁹⁶ Barbauld, III, 111.

three most excellent pieces at least once a year; and that I am capable of doing it with increasing pleasure, which is perpetually doubled by the reflexion, that this good man, this charming author, is *my friend!* Your works are an inexhaustible fund of entertainment and instruction. I have been this day weeping over the seventh volume of *Clarissa*, as if I had attended her dying bed, and assisted at her funeral procession. O may my latter end be like hers! Adieu, my dear friend!¹⁹⁷

The passionate language with which Edwards chooses to express his feelings to Richardson is the language of a fanatical devotee, a man impressed by the concept of celebrity, a true fan. Edwards's isolation has rendered him socially abandoned with little more than Richardson's letters and novels as a means of amusement; a situation he seems content with.

The next letter is written within twelve days of Edwards's last, and comes from Richardson. Dated 27 January 1755 the letter discusses current affairs of the day ranging from the impending war in France to the parliamentary elections in Oxford. Richardson shares his daily pastimes with Edwards:

I am employing myself at present in looking over and sorting, and classing my correspondences and other papers. This, when done, will amuse me, by reading over again a very ample correspondence, and in comparing the sentiments of my correspondents, at the time, with the present, and improving from both. The many letters and papers I shall destroy will make an executor's work the easier; and if any of my friends desire their letters to be returned, they will be readily come at for that purpose. Otherwise they will amuse and direct my children, and teach them to honour their father's friends in their closets for the favours done him.¹⁹⁸

The melancholy tone with which Richardson describes his latest employment is reminiscent of a sensitive man who is aware that he is coming to the end of his life (Richardson had another six years to live), but his pragmatic approach is that of an assiduous business man. As the letter progresses we learn that Richardson has 'just received the fourth volume of *Grandison* [...] from the German translator', and he reports to Edwards that they consider it to be 'imperfect, or

¹⁹⁷ Barbauld, III, 111-112.

¹⁹⁸ Barbauld, III, 114.

suppose that they have it not all', but he does not dwell on this and quickly moves on to the close his letter.¹⁹⁹ In Edwards's reply, dated 4 February 1755, he addresses Richardson's latest employment by claiming that 'it will give great pleasure to yourself, and will be an inexhaustible fund of entertainment and instruction to those who come after you', and hopes that he can 'flatter himself that some lines of mine will remain in this collection, as a monument to your family of the true friendship and sincere regard I bore to their worthy parent?,'²⁰⁰ Here we see Edwards congratulating Richardson for his fastidious and worthy work, while in the same breath asking for the opportunity to be able to publicly show to those closest to Richardson the depth of his regard for him. Edwards also asks for assurance that his name will go down in posterity as a friend of the famous writer Samuel Richardson.

After a short lapse in communication Edwards finds himself apologising to, and trying to reconnect with Richardson, despite the fact that he was the last to write:

It gives me no small concern, my dear Mr. Richardson, that two long months and more are past since my last to you. I do not remember such a gap in our correspondence since it first began.

Did my situation here afford me materials for writing, though in expectation of a letter every post, and though I had the last word, I should have long since broken this uncomfortable silence: but, alas, I am ill furnished to find my quota of a correspondence, much less can I be able to entertain you wholly from hence on my own small stock.²⁰¹

Edwards's concern over breaks in their communication borders upon the hysterical and highlights the possibility of an unequal commitment within the relationship. He often writes to Richardson with similar concerns when there seems little need.²⁰² There is no question that Richardson enjoys their communication, and he is certainly eager to maintain it but, at times, has a more

¹⁹⁹ Barbauld, III, 114.

²⁰⁰ Barbauld, III, 119.

²⁰¹ There is no extant correspondence between Edwards's letter of the 19 March 1755 and the next recorded letter dated 28 May 1755 (Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 680-681 and Barbauld, III, 120-125). Barbauld, III, 123.

²⁰² Only six months earlier (letter dated 20 November 1754 – Barbauld, III, 96) Edwards had written to Richardson asking for their correspondence to be renewed after a break of a month.

cavalier approach to their relationship. Richardson was a busy and famous man who ran two businesses (printing and writing), was the head of a large family, and who managed a network of correspondents each of whom demanded some of his time. Conversely, Edwards was a wealthy bachelor who spent his time writing sonnets and tending his country garden while hankering after just a modicum of the public recognition that Richardson was experiencing.

Both a personal and writing relationship between Richardson and Edwards continues until Edwards's death, at Parson's Green, in 1757. In Barbauld's edition there are four further letters (dated 28 July 1755; 19 March 1756; 15 April, 1756; 12 July 1756) selected which cover the many subjects that the two men discussed throughout their relationship. Thomas Edwards is somewhat of an anomaly in terms of positioning within a fan club. At times he exhibits the characteristics of a close and sincere friend, but at other times he leans toward being an obtrusive fan who is largely interested in being recognised as the friend of an eminent author. There is no doubt that Edwards adored Richardson's novels, and read them many times, but his anxious and oft-unnecessary, commitment to maintaining a steady flow of communication between himself and Richardson surely indicates a significant amount of fan-like behaviour.

Samuel Lobb

In the short exchange between Richardson and the Lobb family, Barbauld includes letters dated from 1743 to 1756. There are six letters in total and the first one begins with the information that Richardson has become the god-father to one of Samuel Lobb's sons. The letter, dated 21 May 1743 is gushing, but sincere as Lobb describes the events of the christening which Richardson was absent from due to 'affairs' that he was attending to elsewhere.²⁰³ Lobb closes the letter with a short paragraph about his own good charity. In it he relates the story of a nurse to whom he had given three guineas to on the day of the christening, followed by a further three the next day, according to Lobb 'she was almost beside herself, and, in the surprise of her joy, she fell down on her knees, stammering out a million, ten millions, of thanks'.²⁰⁴ The exchange of money, in return for both the

²⁰³ Barbauld, I, 175.

²⁰⁴ Barbauld, I, 176.

woman's response, and the opportunity for Lobb to relate his story is a typical example of what Mauss uncovers in his book *The Gift*.

In chapter one Marcel Mauss's theory of 'the gift' was used to offer an insight into the complexities of the gift-giving system. Again, Mauss's thesis is useful here to assist us in an understanding of how 'the gift' works as an analogy for an exchange of letters in a correspondence. Samuel Lobb is able to reap his reward by relaying his story to Richardson via the medium of the letter. Not only does Lobb manage to retell his story, thus reliving the supposed altruistic experience, but he uses the letter to deliver the good news. Richardson has two gifts in one: a letter, and the news of charitable offerings held within it. Mauss challenges the already established codes of giving, and renounces the modern world's growing obsession with, and desires for, consumption. For Mauss, there is no such thing as giving without wishing to receive. In fact it is not even about 'wishing', but about something more innate. For Mauss the idea of the 'free gift' is merely a contradiction. He explains firstly, that it is the collective that sets the precedent and insists that:

In the economic and legal systems that have preceded our own, one hardly ever finds a simple exchange of goods, wealth, and products in transactions concluded by individuals. First, it is not individuals but collectivities that impose obligations of exchange and contract upon each other [...] Moreover, what they exchange is not solely property and wealth, movable and immovable goods, and things economically useful. In particular, such exchanges are acts of politeness: banquets, rituals, military services, women, children, dances, festivals, and fairs, in which economic transaction is only one element, and in which the passing on of wealth is only one feature of a much more general and enduring contract [...] However, more detailed research has now uncovered a quite considerable number of intermediate forms between those exchanges comprising very acute rivalry and the destruction of wealth [...] where emulation is more moderate but where those entering into contracts seek to outdo one another in their gifts. In the same way we vie with one another in our presents of thanks, banquets and weddings, and in simple invitations. We still feel the need to *revanchieren* (get one's own back), as the Germans say.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Mauss, pp. 6-9.

The christening of Samuel Lobb's son fulfils the criteria for Mauss's argument, and the exchange between the aforementioned nurse and Lobb substantiates his hypotheses. Lobb is in an environment which is filled with happiness and pride, and his nurse reaps the benefit of the community in which she finds herself in. Her response is fantastically dramatic, which Lobb revels in reporting to Richardson.

The second phase of Mauss's argument concerns itself with obligation, and he uses this idea as a context for his entire argument. Mauss is looking for the 'force' that impels the individual to reciprocate what he has received, and he builds a strong argument for conscience by case-studying the Maori tradition for *hau* (the spirit), *taonga* (the article), *utu* (the return), *tika* (fair play), *rawe* (the desirable) and *kino* (the undesirable). Each element plays a large part in the tradition of gift-giving and is engaged in a cyclical process of giving, receiving and passing-on in order to avoid risking offence and more crucially, to maintain status. Even though Mauss uses archaic societies as examples for his thesis, he is convinced that 'it is possible to extend these observations to our own societies', claiming that 'a considerable part of our morality and our lives themselves are still permeated with this same atmosphere of the gift, where obligation and liberty intermingle.'²⁰⁶ For Richardson and his correspondents it helps to establish the hierarchy within which they all exist, and helps to contextualise the position that Richardson's friends found themselves in:

The unreciprocated gift still makes the person who has accepted it inferior, particularly when it has been accepted with no thought of returning it [...] Charity is still wounding for him who has accepted it, and the whole tendency of our morality is to strive to do away with the unconscious and injurious patronage of the rich almsgiver.

The invitation must be returned, just as 'courtesies' must. Surprisingly, here are to be seen traces of the old, traditional, moral basis, that of the ancient aristocratic potlatches. Here we also see come to the surface these fundamental motives for human activity: emulation between individuals of the same sex, that 'basic imperialism' of human beings. On the one hand, it is the social basis, on the other the animal and psychological basis, that appears. In that separate existence that

²⁰⁶ Mauss, p. 83.

constitutes our social life, we ourselves cannot 'lag behind', as the expression goes. We must give back more than we have received. The round of drinks is ever dearer and larger in size. [...] One must act the 'great lord' upon such occasions. It may even be said that one section of our people is constantly behaving like this, and spends with the utmost extravagance on guests and on feast days, and with New Year gifts.²⁰⁷

For all of Richardson's correspondents this continual circle of exchange was unavoidable. They wanted to engage with the famous author, and had no choice but to become embroiled in the social tenet highlighted here by Mauss.

Lobb's next letter is dated a few years later, 1 March 1747-8, and for all intents and purposes is somewhat dull. In it Lobb refers to an anonymous friend – Richardson – to whom he owes a letter. Whilst Richardson would no doubt have been amused by Lobb's style, its contents exhibit the usual ingratiating hyperbole that has emerged from Barbauld's selections. Lobb's convoluted apology tells Richardson that he has shown off his letter to various people (Ralph Allen, James Leake and his wife) so that they will know 'what footing I had in the friendship'.²⁰⁸

Richardson replied almost immediately (7 March 1747-8), gaining the moral high ground, and accepts Lobb's apology. He stresses that there was little need for it, other than to pacify any concerns Richardson might have developed for his health. The letter is relatively short but succinct, and Richardson, perhaps out of politeness, mentions his initial concerns about the parading of his letter by Lobb to 'my worthy and valued friends'.²⁰⁹ He very quickly appeases his own concerns for this when he realises that Lobb 'undesignedly, gave greater reputation to your own amiable grateful disposition in the over-rate, than could be due to me, had the matter been of much higher value.'²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Mauss, pp. 83-84.

²⁰⁸ Barbauld, I, 179.

²⁰⁹ Barbauld, I, 182.

²¹⁰ Barbauld, I, 182.

Lord Orrery

As if to show Richardson's connection to persons of eminence, Barbauld includes in a single letter from Lord Orrery.²¹¹ The letter is dated 9 November 1753 and is less than a page long (it runs to exactly 16 lines in Barbauld's edition). Richardson had sent Lord Orrery a 'most valuable present', and he is expressing his thanks 'not only in my own name, but in the name of my whole family.'²¹² Even though the letter exhibits great praise for Richardson, it is less overtly sycophantic, showing refinement, eloquence, and reserve:

Yet, I own, we thank you for sleepless nights and sore eyes, and perhaps, there are aching hearts and salt tears still in reserve for us.

I wish your gift might have been to a more useful servant; but, as I feared, so I found it impossible to be the important friend I most heartily wished myself.²¹³

We can only assume that the gift that Lord Orrery is referring to is a copy of *Sir Charles Grandison*. This letter was written at the time of the Irish piracy of Richardson's novel, and Lord Orrery had been enlisted – by David Garrick – in an attempt to exercise his influence in Ireland.²¹⁴ It had failed. However, the short letter shows a commitment to exchange, as well as a hyperbolically emotional enjoyment of Richardson's gift.

In 1754 Lord Orrery had published *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift*, a revealing biography that exposed Swift's turbulent relationship with his wife, and although some had criticised it harshly, both Richardson and Lady Bradshaigh had regarded it highly.

Edward Young

Barbauld has selected twenty-seven letters from the Richardson-Young correspondence to appear in her edition; twenty of which are from Young, and seven from Richardson, one of which is to Mrs. (Mary) Hallows, Young's housekeeper. There is also a song composed by Young. Already there is a pattern

²¹¹ John Boyle (Lord Orrery) 5th Earl of Cork and Orrery. Barbauld also does this earlier with William Warburton (Barbauld, I, 133-134).

²¹² Barbauld, I, 171.

²¹³ Barbauld, I, 171-172.

²¹⁴ Barbauld, I, 172. Eaves and Kimpel, p. 379.

emerging which indicates Barbauld's intended structure: more letters from the correspondents which glorify her subject and a selected few from Richardson which highlight his all-round goodness.

Edward Young, whilst being a fan of Richardson's was indeed a successful writer and poet in his own right, perhaps never on the scale of Richardson's popularity or commercial saleability, but nevertheless he was a man of letters. Young's father had been the Dean of Salisbury Cathedral, and his son was educated at Winchester and then at various colleges in Oxford (New College; Corpus Christi; and All Souls). Young was made a law fellow at All Souls in 1709 and he remained there for most of his life. His enduring legacy would be found in his blank verse poem, *The Complaint, or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality*, which was published between 1742-1746.²¹⁵

Young and Richardson's correspondence lasted some 16 years, from June 1744 to September 1760. Young comes across in his letters as a complex character; ill and depressed at times, supportive and logical at others, and tirelessly religious. He exhibits wit, positivity, and reassurance but can easily descend into melancholia. The opening letter found in Barbauld's edition immediately addresses the issue of illness, and throughout her selection of letters there is a sense of competition, much like with Hill, between Richardson and Young as to whose health was worse. This opening sentence to this first letter is forthright as Young declares: 'Our good friend Sir John!!-The book you put into my hand at his request, I read', but then the letter descends into a discussion on Young's ill-health.²¹⁶ Young claims that he suffers from the same nervous affliction as Richardson and has obviously received a letter from his friend with advice about how to manage it. Young is sorry that Richardson is in a position to offer such advice. The letter has a familiarity about it that suggests the men knew one another quite well before it was written.

Throughout their correspondence the men make assurances to each other that they will visit one another. Richardson constantly promises his correspondents that he will visit them, but very rarely does. The gift of a promise to visit appears to placate most of his friends, but Young relentlessly pursues Richardson on this

²¹⁵ James E. May, 'Young, Edward (bap. 1683, d. 1765)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>> [accessed 27 March 2010].

²¹⁶ Barbauld, II, 1.

subject. He is cloyingly persistent, and insists that Richardson should keep his promise:

If I do not see you now, I shall despair of ever seeing you at Wellwyn. The season of the year, the fineness of the weather, the vacation from business, the benefit to your health, the gratification to your friend, the regard to your promise, and, perhaps, the company of Mr. Cibber, (to whom my humble service) may possibly incline you to confer this much desired favour on,

Dear Sir,

your truly affectionate

humble servant,

E. Young.

My love and service to Mrs. Richardson and the little ones.

It will be no interruption to your amour with Clarissa. She may travel with you, and be assured of a hearty welcome.²¹⁷

Despite Young's insistence Richardson still does not manage to find time for a trip to Wellwyn to visit his friend, and the letter that Barbauld uses as a reply to Young's is dated some 3 months later. Eaves and Kimpel confirm this as the only extant correspondence to pass between the two men at this time. Richardson's reply is manipulative as he largely manages to exonerate himself by fully taking the blame. By doing this he is accepting his lapse in friendship whilst at the same time situating himself in the superior position, as his correspondent has no choice but to forgive. Of course Richardson is also unashamed to use *Clarissa*, and Young's involvement as a trusted early adviser, to his advantage by informing his correspondent that he has found himself in 'contentions' and 'disputes' over her. Richardson makes it clear that his only – and it is truly hypothetical – wish is that he 'had never consulted any body but Dr. Young, who so kindly vouchsafed me his ear, and sometimes his opinion.'²¹⁸ He goes on to inform his friend that 'Two volumes will attend your commands, whenever you please to give me your

²¹⁷ Barbauld, II, 23.

²¹⁸ Barbauld, II, 23.

direction for sending them. I think I shall publish in about a fortnight.’²¹⁹ The roles that we are now used to seeing being played out by Richardson and his correspondents is inverted here as Richardson adopts reverse psychology to relieve himself of this awkward situation, and the gifts of apology and acquiescence, particularly from someone of Richardson’s standing, have the desired effect. In this short reply Richardson also offers the manuscripts to Caroline Lee, Young’s step-daughter, but he is concerned that the character of Lovelace will offend her delicate sensibilities, and he asserts that he is unsure whether she will be able to recognise that ‘it is as from you or me.’²²⁰ Richardson allies himself with Young as a virtual co-writer of the novel; an acknowledgment, and form of distorted flattery that would appease any disagreement.

The letters between Richardson and Young show a relationship built on trust, and a mutual paranoia of illness. It is a competitive relationship at times, and both men boast of their achievements, and gloat in their mutual admiration and appreciation for one another. They know one another well and Young poignantly observes that:

You convince me, every day, more and more, of the singularity of your character; your heart is, I find, set on doing good offices, and to those who are least capable of returning them. If there is any such thing as virtue, it consists in such conduct; and if there is any such thing as wisdom, it consists in virtue! What else can furnish either joy or peace? For when a man has had years, reflexion, and experience enough to take off the mark from men and things, it is impossible for him to propose to himself any true peace, but peace of conscience; or any real joy, but joy of the Holy Ghost. This, another might call preaching; but you, Sir, must either condemn the whole tenor of your life, or allow it to be common sense.²²¹

For the purpose of Anna Barbauld’s construction of Richardson, and indeed Richardson’s construction of himself, Young’s observations are, metaphorically

²¹⁹ Barbauld, II, 24.

²²⁰ Barbauld, II, 25. Richardson had concerns about the character of Lovelace and in the third letter (Barbauld, II, 4-6) that Barbauld includes in her edition, Young devotes his entire time to reasoning out, clarifying and reassuring Richardson on the subject. The novelist had been relentlessly attacked about Lovelace and his exploits, and he turns to Young for support.

²²¹ Barbauld, II, 15-16.

speaking, heaven sent. In one succinct passage Young presents them with an exact depiction of how they want Richardson to appear. In the same short letter, which is barely a page and a half long, Young once again dwells on Richardson's avowed promises whilst at the same time unequivocally announcing his feelings for Richardson:

Though it is night, it is a star-light night; and if you (as you have promised) should succeed him in our little hemisphere, I should welcome Richardson as returning day. – In a word, I love you, and delight in your conversation, which permits me to think of something more than what I see! a favour which the conversation of very few others will indulge to.²²²

This overt display of emotion is not found anywhere else in Richardson's correspondence, and certainly leaves no ambiguity as to the importance of their relationship with one another. Young undoubtedly considered Richardson as an equal, which would have delighted him and could possibly have been the *raison d'être* for their enduring correspondence.

Aaron Hill

Aaron Hill was one of Richardson's closest and most consistent correspondents, and so far as we can find, the correspondence between the two men lasted some nineteen years. The Hill letters are amongst those that are reasonably legible; the ink is thick and black, seeping through to the reverse side of the paper, making that side slightly harder to read. Hill's handwriting is large – each letter reaching the approximate height of between 4-6mm – and whilst it is in the most part consistently straight, it has a tendency at times to slope slightly to the right of each page, but his handwriting is well constructed, and he tends to use as much of the paper as is possible, often rotating it to write along the edges.

The earliest letter from Hill to be found among the manuscripts in the Forster Collection is dated 6 March 1735. However, Anna Laetitia Barbauld offers an earlier letter in her 1804 edition, dated 1 June 1730.²²³ Richardson's health is a

²²² Barbauld, II, 16-17. Young's dinner guest that evening was the Rev. Mr. Watty, who is described as 'a frosty night' (Barbauld, II, 16).

²²³ Christine Gerrard confirms that this is misdated by Barbauld, stating that its actual date is 1738.

permanent feature throughout their correspondence, and Barbauld has chosen to begin her selection by painting a picture of Richardson as a man who, even as early as 1730 – early in relative terms, given that Richardson did not publish his first novel until he was 51 years old – was struggling with his health, but carried on regardless, going on to publish three works of fiction that, arguably, changed the face of literature.

Little attention has been given to the constant references to health in eighteenth century letters, and the Richardson's correspondence is a great source for future scholars who may be interested in following this line of research. Throughout the letters, whether through courtesy or prying curiosity, continual requests for information about health – each others health, family health, neighbours health, household health – is rife. The subject was obviously recognised as a common topic, as both John Duncombe and Hester Mulso wrote 'An Ode to Health' in the mid 1750's. Mulso's ode is directed at Richardson's continued poor health, and she makes it clear that she believes health is 'often unkind to the good and blind to merit'.²²⁴ It would seem that the continued reference to physical condition begins as a polite gesture, but quickly develops into something much larger, and at times there is a competitive element to the exchanges. Edward Young, and to a degree Aaron Hill – Christine Gerrard claims that Hill 'gave way to deep depression. Psychologists would probably diagnose in Hill symptoms of a manic-depressive personality' – both seem to be in competition with Richardson over ill-health and enduring ailments.²²⁵ For some correspondents, namely Dr. Cheyne, the references are longer and predictably concerned with medical practice and curiosity, but the majority of the queries are largely sociable and polite, as if trying to occupy otherwise redundant time, or as a way of acknowledging the abundance of poor health that was endemic at the time.

In this first letter Hill is replying to Richardson, who tells him that he is in better health, and Hill thanks Richardson for letting him know 'that you begin to perceive yourself better', then a short discussion about doctors ensues, before moving on to Milton.²²⁶ From the personal contents of the letter, and Hill's familiarity, we can assume that the men must have been communicating regularly

²²⁴ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 325.

²²⁵ Gerrard, p. 186.

²²⁶ Barbauld, I, 1-2.

for some time, as Hill tells Richardson that ‘It pleases me, but does not surprise me [...] I know your good nature too well, to suspect it of esteem for an object so remotely unlike and unequal.’²²⁷ Of the thirty-five Hill-Richardson letters that Barbauld includes in her work, only two are from the latter. The first of the two is dated 29 October 1742 and is in reply to one that Hill had sent to Richardson five days earlier on the 24 October 1742. Hill’s letter is characteristically grave, reporting that ‘I languish still, and hourly shrink away in flesh and spirit [...] All my family have been, or are, in the same bad condition.’²²⁸ Much of the letter is dedicated to a member of Hill’s staff; a man who was very highly regarded by the Hill family, and the loss that he describes to Richardson is immense.²²⁹ Hill closes his letter with hopes of spending more time with Richardson, and it is the melancholy nature of Hill’s letter that prompts Richardson to write; not that this was unusual. The original manuscripts of Richardson’s correspondence with Hill provides evidence that Richardson was an equal contributor to the relationship, but what is unusual is Barbauld’s decision only to include two of his letters in her edition.²³⁰ Richardson’s reply is swift, and in it he hopes to remedy Hill’s predicament by suggesting that ‘the asses milk’ will aid him, and also by offering the gift of his home in Hammersmith to Hill and his family.²³¹ Richardson is persistent and persuasive, and begins his rhetoric by telling Hill that in a conversation with a ‘skilful friend, who greatly admires you’, they deduced that the air out in Plaistow was not conducive to sufficient recovery, and this was largely to do with the season when the ‘fall of the leaves fills the pool, the ponds [...] with particles, and animalcula, and perishables, of vegetable as well as animal nature, that are so noxious to tender constitutions’.²³² Richardson argues further that these are in direct contrast to ‘the London smoak, and the warmer air of a close compacted city’ which will be of benefit to the Hill family ailments.²³³

²²⁷ Barbauld, I, 2. Hill is referring to Richardson’s comments on Milton’s prose writings. Hill had dismissed some of Milton’s ideas and Richardson had disagreed with him.

²²⁸ Barbauld, I, 80.

²²⁹ Due to poor financial circumstances, Hill and his family had to settle in Plaistow, which was then considered to be some distance from London. Hill disliked living there, preferring to be ‘in the dry, smoaky air of London’ and frequently blames the location for the ill-health he and those around him endured (Barbauld, I, 82).

²³⁰ Both letters from Richardson show him in the best possible light. Barbauld’s choices represent him as charitable, considerate and accommodating as well as loyal, supportive and dependable.

²³¹ Barbauld, I, 84.

²³² Barbauld, I, 83.

²³³ Barbauld, I, 83-84.

At this point Richardson suggests that until Hill is able to fulfil the wish himself, he would like to offer his house in Hammersmith to them, and he proceeds to inform Hill of the set up there should he wish to visit.²³⁴ Richardson seems unconvinced of Hill's compliance on the subject, but nevertheless presses his point further by reassuring Hill that 'I hope, Sir, my freedom in what I have mentioned will convince you of the ease and convenience it would be to me to be thus favoured.'²³⁵ Richardson is convinced that a change of air would help, and again impresses his point on Hill by explaining that he will do nothing out of the ordinary to accommodate his friend.²³⁶ Richardson closes his letter by referring to the servant that Hill has recently lost, and he reassures him that the man, in his dying moments, will have been comforted in the knowledge that he had such a master. Richardson candidly tells Hill that he has no intention of dwelling on the subject but that it has been useful in offering him a platform on which to argue that a 'change of scene, as well as air' can only be beneficial, and he hopes that Hill will 'support my earnest wishes in the favour begged for by' him.²³⁷ Hill turned down Richardson's invitation.

The roles being played out by the two men are problematical. On the one hand there is Hill, an educated gentleman who has found himself in an indigent position. In contrast there is Richardson, a tradesman who is wealthy, and part of the eighteenth century *nouveau-riche*. This confused dichotomy of both fiscal and emotional difference signifies complicated flows of status in gift giving. Richardson acquires the prominent position as giver every time, and Hill is forced into the role of gracious acceptor. In his study of the gift of blood donation, Richard M. Titmuss discusses Professor B. Schwartz's ideas about gift and identity:

²³⁴ Throughout their letters Hill often mentions his wish to move to London, but explains that he is unable to because of his financial restraints, but also because he is tied into a contract for the lease of the property in Plaistow. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Hammersmith was, at the time, considered to be quite some distance from London and Richardson used his property there as a rural retreat, so it could be argued that Richardson was offering one rural area for another, but what seems important to Richardson is that the Hill's get peace, quiet and a change of scenery, and so he tells his friend that he cannot offer them Salisbury-Court as there will be no 'solemnity' for them there (Barbault, I, 85). Plaistow is marginally further away from London than Hammersmith but was thought to have better 'air', but by offering his second home to Hill, Richardson propounds his elevated position over Hill's deflated one even further.

²³⁵ Barbault, I, 85.

²³⁶ Barbault, I, 86.

²³⁷ Barbault, I, 86.

He discusses in turn the gift as a generator of identity ('Gifts are one of the ways in which pictures that others have of us in their minds are transmitted'); the gift as a personal tool in the aspiration for and protection of status and control (for example, gifts as 'conspicuous waster' to shame recipients); the 'gift' as a 'gratitude imperative' in compelling reciprocity or controlling the behaviour of the recipient; and gift-exchange as a technique for the regulation of shared guilt.²³⁸

Richardson's identity is shaped by his acts of gift giving because as giver he is able to dictate the roles that each adopt. The exchange agreement between Hill and Richardson might appear to be one-sided, but Hill's status as an educated gentleman is his indelible pawn. To all intents and purposes, Richardson is always playing catch-up, and is therefore guilty of attempting to protect his position whilst maintaining a passive control over his correspondents.

Richardson enjoyed being in a position to help people, and in his mind it elevated his status. Eaves and Kimpel observe that he enjoyed a convivial repartee with another friend about it:

He disliked being under an obligation, though he loved to confer obligations. 'You love to give as much as a Miser does to receive', wrote Dr. Cheyne, who had a long friendly struggle with Richardson about which was under obligation to the other. [...] There is a touch of the older middle-class commercial pride in this trait, as well as of Richardson's love of independence.

[...] he tried to rise above his own class. On at least one letter, to Samuel Lobb, and on his will, he used a seal with arms similar to those rightfully used by several genteel families of Richardsons, but not identical with any. The arms had never been granted him by the College of Arms, and the seal was evidently a result of mild vanity. When Mrs. Donnellan asked him whether he was related to Sir Thomas Richardson (as he was not) he replied 'with a smile' "He believe[d] He was" – or to that purpose' – or so his unreliable daughter Anne remembered being told.²³⁹

²³⁸ Titmuss, p. 75.

²³⁹ Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 540-541.

Eaves and Kimpel make much of Richardson's vanity, but mostly in defence of him as they draw attention to their own century of scholars and note that they enjoyed 'ferreting out secret shame', as well as taking pride in 'laugh[ing], patronizingly or scornfully, at most men of the past. No one has been more laughed at than Richardson.'²⁴⁰ However, they cite five and a half pages of examples of Richardson's vanity, and tie it into ideas of class and social standing.

In Eaves and Kimpel's biography of Richardson we see that the concepts of obligation, status and vanity are inextricably linked, and a cycle of personality trait is formed: the obliged is of lower status than the obliger, naturally the position of the giver is therefore higher; those who have acquired the higher status – whether attained by heritage or achieved, like Richardson, by other means – considers themselves to be more worthy, or of a higher prestige, resulting in vanity. Richardson's vanity escalated to such an extent that he was confident enough to assume that his letters would be published and as Eaves and Kimpel confirm: 'his correspondence is necessarily one-sided.'²⁴¹

Richardson chose the letters that he wanted to leave behind. He methodically selected fans that he wanted to be represented by. The extant correspondence largely concerns itself with Richardson's goodness, and the fame he experienced as a result of his writing. Richardson was introduced to many of his correspondents by existing ones, and his policy was to offer the possibility of a correspondence, but with the caveat that the new introduction should write first. This was predominantly the case with the women he met, particularly if they were titled. Of course, the social implications were such that this custom was imperative, but it was also advantageous to Richardson as the correspondence was immediately established at a high status level.

Eaves and Kimpel are also curious about the existing archive of letters:

It [the correspondence] does not reflect, for instance, his fast and enduring friendship with the Speaker of the House of Commons, who mentions enjoying his company, or with various civil servants mentioned in his will and in passing elsewhere, or with such colleagues in the trade as the Rivingtons, the Osborns, Millar and

²⁴⁰ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 518. They also make the point that 'Richardson's leading characters rise in rank from *Pamela* to *Sir Charles*' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 541).

²⁴¹ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 538.

Gosling. All through his life a great deal of his time was devoted to business, and apparently the men with whom he associated respected him highly. He wrote mainly to people outside London, and he wrote many of his longest and chattiest letters to women – who, among other things, had more time to write. With these qualifications, it is quite true that Richardson enjoyed talking and writing to women.²⁴²

So what exactly did Samuel Richardson want his legacy to be? From Eaves and Kimpel's reflection and, more significantly, from the manuscript correspondence it is possible to argue that Richardson had decided that his legacy would be that of a famously respected writer, and what better way to achieve this goal than by leaving a selection, albeit unfairly representative, of hand-picked correspondents. Despite being an esteemed businessman, it was the glitz and glamour of the celebrity arena that appealed to him, and that he wanted to be remembered as being a part of. Richardson had somehow convinced himself that the legacy of fame was far more durable than the legacy derived from business. Anna Barbauld propounds this legacy in her edition, but whether or not she had the same intuition about those missing from his archive cannot be confirmed.

Almost all of Hill's letters to Richardson exhibit some kind of gratitude. There are books to be grateful for, gifts of money, of free printing, and, of course friendship: Richardson delights in being able to give Hill a famous friend to brag about.²⁴³ However, the byzantine nature of gift-giving is never one-sided, and a return of some description is always required. Throughout the manuscripts, as well as in Barbauld's edition, Richardson is depicted as a man of great charity. He appears as someone who gives without requiring recompense, but Richardson has left us with letters that unequivocally parade his charity.

Aptly titled 'No free gifts', Mary Douglas's foreword to Mauss's book begins by stating that: 'Charity is meant to be a free gift, a voluntary, unrequited surrender of resources. Though we laud charity as a Christian virtue we know that it wounds.'²⁴⁴ If Douglas is to be believed, it would seem that not only is the act

²⁴² Eaves and Kimpel, p. 538. Richardson mentions Millar in a letter to Margaret Collier dated 5 January 1756.

²⁴³ Richardson was often useful to friends in need, for example Samuel Johnson (see chapter 1), and Margaret Collier (see section on Collier in this chapter).

²⁴⁴ Douglas, p. ix.

of charity bittersweet, but the word itself is merely a veil that covers up a *faux* altruistic demonstration. Whilst I am comfortable with their idea, and largely agree with it, in some cases there is less need for austerity. For example, the giving of an uncelebrated donation has to be different to the celebration that Richardson craves and subsequently receives.²⁴⁵ In these circumstances the donator still receives the reciprocated gift by reaping his reward personally, safe in the knowledge that he has helped. Richardson, however, gives the appearance of modesty, but is still willing to leave behind substantial evidence of his activities.

The sombre nature of most of Hill's letters show him to be a misunderstood man, and mostly by the reading world. His work is largely unpopular, and he recognises this. Hill satisfies himself that his work will flourish posthumously, and in a reply to a harsh, but true letter from Richardson, Hill admits that:

it [Richardson's letter] tells me nothing new, of the low estimation of my writings: I have always known them, and expected them to be, unpopular: nor shall I live to see them in another light. But there will rise a time, in which they *will* be seen in a far different one: I know it, on a surer hope than that of vanity.²⁴⁶

Hill was under no illusion about the reception of his work and remained unflinchingly loyal to his chosen style. On hearing of the death of his arch-nemesis Alexander Pope, in 1744, Hill at first exhibits the appropriate, but short, decorum, before entering into a diatribe on Pope's confidence and success: 'not [to] blush to have the cunning to blow himself up', Hill is glad that fame has taken her revenge: 'It is pleasant to observe the justice of forced fame; she lets down those, at once, who got themselves pushed upward'.²⁴⁷

The second, and final, letter from Richardson to Hill is dated 27 October 1748 and even though the subject matter is different to that of the first Richardson-Hill

²⁴⁵ Richardson was unafraid of bragging about his success, and in a letter to Johannes Stinstra dated 6 December 1752 he unashamedly informs him of the fame and new friends that his novels have brought him. In reference to Richardson's letter to Stinstra, Eaves and Kimpel clearly state 'that *Clarissa* had brought him many friends and greatly enlarged his correspondence with both sexes.' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 285)

²⁴⁶ Barbauld, I, 125.

²⁴⁷ Barbauld, I, 105, and 107. Hill and Pope had been on good terms but had a disagreement when their friendly and professional teasing turned into an offensive snub.

letter, it is still able to show Richardson in a favourable light. Richardson is responding to a letter in which Hill has once again exhibited great humility, and Richardson steps in to bolster his friends' confidence, which is Richardson's consistent return gift to Hill. Richardson announces that Hill is 'an alien [...] in this world; and no wonder that the base world treat you as such' - what greater gift could Richardson give to his friend than the idea that he is of another, much greater world, where something higher power will appreciate and understand him.²⁴⁸ As the letter proceeds we learn that Hill has also offered Richardson a gift: the copyright to all of his works. Of course Richardson declines the gesture stating 'that that point must be left to the future issue of things', but promises to 'keep account', which he stresses in italics a few lines later.²⁴⁹ Richardson thoroughly appreciates the enormity of Hill's gesture, and continues to reassure him of his abilities and place within literature. He compares Hill to both Milton and Shakespeare, telling him that he is doubtful as to whether either of these great writers would have been accepted by the audience that Hill is trying to appeal to.²⁵⁰ Richardson's entire letter is concerned with supporting his friend, and he goes to great lengths to do so. He explains that in order for any genius to progress and appeal to the next generation, 'works published in this age must take root in it, to flourish in the next.'²⁵¹ A discussion ensues about the title of Hill's latest work, and Richardson makes some astute observations on the book trade while at the same time offering advice to Hill:

As to your title, Sir, which you are pleased to require my opinion of, let me premise, that there was a time, and that within my own remembrance, when a pompous title was almost necessary to promote the sale of a book. But the booksellers, whose business it is to watch the taste and foibles of the public, soon (as they never fail on such occasions to do) wore out that fashion: and now, verifying the old observation, that good wine needs no bush, a pompous or laboured title is looked upon as a certain sign of want of merit in the performance, and hardly ever becomes an invitation to the purchaser.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Barbauld, I, 119.

²⁴⁹ Barbauld, I, 119-120.

²⁵⁰ Barbauld, I, 120.

²⁵¹ Barbauld, I, 121.

²⁵² Barbauld, I, 122. Hill's intended title was 'Gideon; or, the Patriot. An epic Poem', and Richardson is steering him away from using 'epic' until he has defined the word to his potential

Again Richardson's business experience is called upon to reassure his correspondent whilst also delivering a back-handed compliment. Richardson is in prime position once again and, perhaps without intent, manages to keep Hill sufficiently undermined.

Hill is concerned about how he has been perceived by the actor David Garrick, and Richardson's final act of reassures sees him telling Hill that even though he has not seen Garrick perform 'on the stage; [...] I am pretty well acquainted with him.'²⁵³ Richardson goes on to reassure Hill that he knows that Garrick 'honours you. But he thinks you above the present low taste; (this I speak in confidence) and once I heard him say as much, and wish that you could descend to it.'²⁵⁴ In various letters that pass between Hill and Richardson there is an evident abundance of praise for one another's writing prowess. Hill is a devoted fan of Richardson's work, and in return Richardson tries to exhibit the same amount of enthusiasm for Hill's work, but it never has the same zeal as Hill's earnest praise, and at times it comes across as disingenuous.

Hill was four years older than Richardson and died early in 1750, aged 65. The last letter that Barbauld includes in her edition is from Hill to Richardson and is dated 2 November 1748. Eaves and Kimpel note that the final activity between the two men was in August 1749, with a letter from Hill to Richardson dated 11 August, and the last letter from Richardson to Hill being dated seven days later on the 18 August. The extant manuscripts confirm this, but in a letter to Philip Skelton, dated 10 February 1750 Richardson reports that: 'I have just lost my dear and excellent-hearted friend, Mr. Hill, author of *Gideon*. I was present at some of his last scenes: my nerves can witness that I was.'²⁵⁵ This reference tells us that the men were still in contact right up to Hill's death. Richardson remained in contact with Hill's daughters and, according to Eaves and Kimpel 'continued to shower his benefactions' on them.²⁵⁶

reader. Richardson is concerned that such grandiose vocabulary is both divisive and excluding. The poem went to press with the title '*Gideon*', but is consistently referred to as 'Hill's epic poem *Gideon*'.

²⁵³ Barbauld, I, 123.

²⁵⁴ Barbauld, I, 123.

²⁵⁵ Barbauld, V, 199-200.

²⁵⁶ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 325. Richardson corresponded with Hill's daughters for a while but the contact eventually dwindled. His most evident communication was with Urania Johnson, Hill's

Hill's letters, in particular the later ones, generally show him to be a dissatisfied man, frustrated by what life had offered him. Early in his career he was a promising talent, who 'had been prominent, if not quite famous'.²⁵⁷ Hill's poor financial situation made him grateful to Richardson, and often his letters exhibit a victim-like tone, appreciative of anything that he was offered. He was a voracious reader, and Richardson would frequently send books and pamphlets to him in Plaistow, so that Hill could remain in touch with the latest news and literature. In return Hill would begin every letter with unparalleled thanks. Apart from the occasional flashes of humour, the excessive obsequiousness becomes uncomfortable to read at times and is only alleviated by the counterpoint defeatism and grousing that runs concurrently with it. The last letter that Barbauld includes in her selection offers an excellent example of Hill's fawning:

I really thought, dear Sir, that neither my affection, admiration, or warm grateful sense of your inimitable virtues, could have admitted the increase given to it, by the sincere, kind, friendly plainness, of this last obliging letter.²⁵⁸

There is no doubt that Richardson was functionally useful to Hill, but the reciprocation was unequal. To suggest that Richardson only maintained his capacious correspondence with Hill in order to add weight to his fan club is frankly absurd. Hill and Richardson had been friends before the publication of *Pamela*, when all Richardson had to offer him was friendship, a printing press and the occasional gift. Their correspondence is a testament to the true friendship that the men maintained over many years. Richardson liked and admired Hill, this is not in doubt, but he also enjoyed the magnificent displays of gratitude that Hill showered upon him, as a result of his charity. We know that Richardson pretended not to enjoy the incessant fawning, and we also know that Richardson had

eldest daughter. The last extant letter from her is dated 9 September 1758. Richardson also received a letter shortly after Hill's death, from his brother Gilbert. The letter is dated 22 May 1750 and is addressed from Plaistow. In it Gilbert Hill tells of his gratitude to Richardson for the kindness he showed to his brother and his family.

²⁵⁷ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 40. Hill's family, whilst not part of the noble elite, was quite well connected to them, and he married an heiress, Miranda Morris, in 1710. Due to poor business practice, and various lawsuits, their financial situation floundered at times, and what was once a reasonable amount of money, soon became a shoe-string budget. Hill's poetry became unfashionable and his career waned.

²⁵⁸ Barbauld, I, 124-125.

delusions of grandeur – we have only to remember the questions posed to him about his heritage by another of his correspondents, Mrs. Donnellan.²⁵⁹

In light of Mauss's study of the gift, it is fair to say that Richardson certainly gave in order to receive and, if Barbauld's collection is to be taken into consideration, then the giving that Richardson wanted to be remembered for covers every act of charity: the gift of all-round goodness.

Although Aaron Hill was evidently a fan of Richardson's work their relationship was also one of enduring friendship. However, the differing economic status of the two men creates a problematic deficiency to the idea of equality within their relationship, and ranked positioning has no choice but to exist here.

The group of individuals discussed here share a common interest: Samuel Richardson and his novels. Whether they correspond with him under the umbrella term of friendship or as dedicated supporters, the fact remains that they are his greatest advocates, his fans. Their commitment to, and obsession with Richardson and his novels, and the belief in his plots and characterisations, exhibit similar qualities to those described in the introduction to this chapter. The description of a fan, as offered by the *OED*, is that of 'a keen follower of a specified hobby or amusement, and *gen.* an enthusiast for a particular person or thing', certainly pertains to the behaviour or level of devotion exhibited, for example, by Susanna Highmore, Colley Cibber, Thomas Edwards, or the Colliers (and we shall see such steadfastness again in the following chapters of Sarah Wescomb and Belfour). The commitment and belief of John Duncombe and the impassioned words of Lord Orrery also resonate with aspects of fan culture, and what of the dubious flattery exhibited by William Strahan. While Aaron Hill and Edward Young undoubtedly maintained strong friendship's with the novelist – they knew him quite early on in his career as a writer – they too contributed to Richardson's celebrity status as a famous author. Hill was a devoted fan of Richardson's work, and his excessive obsequiousness is certainly a consequence of having to be endlessly in gratitude to Richardson. Young was Richardson's favoured critic of *Clarissa*, and he welcomed the majority of Young's comments; with alacrity he flatters Richardson with feelings of love and respect.

²⁵⁹ See earlier quote (footnote 239 of this chapter).

Each individual participates in the working life of Samuel Richardson's famous existence. They function as a prosopographical landscape which is dependent upon a group mentality. Like other eighteenth century clubs, Richardson's correspondents enjoy a specific and common interest largely engineered by the author himself.



Samuel Richardson in his grotto at North End, by Mason Chamberlin (Oil on copper, 1754 or before)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Sir Richard Phillips, by James Saxon (Oil on canvas, 1806)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Anna Laetitia Barbauld, by John Chapman, after unknown artist
(Stipple engraving, published 1798)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Portraits in the Characters of the Muses in the Temple of Apollo, by Richard Samuel (Oil on canvas)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Samuel Richardson, the Novelist (1684-1761), Seated, Surrounded by his Second Family 1740-1741, by Francis Hayman
(Oil on canvas) Tate Britain, London



Samuel Richardson, by Joseph Highmore (Oil on canvas, 1750)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Susanna Highmore by Joseph Highmore (Oil on canvas, circa 1740-1745)
National Gallery of Victoria, Australia



Hester Mulso by R. Page, after Unknown artist (Stipple engraving,
published 1 December 1812)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Colley Cibber by Gerard Vander Gucht, after Jean Baptiste van Loo
(Line engraving, published 1740)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Probably Jane Collier by John Faber Jr., after Joseph Highmore
(Mezzotint, mid 18th century)
National Portrait Gallery, London



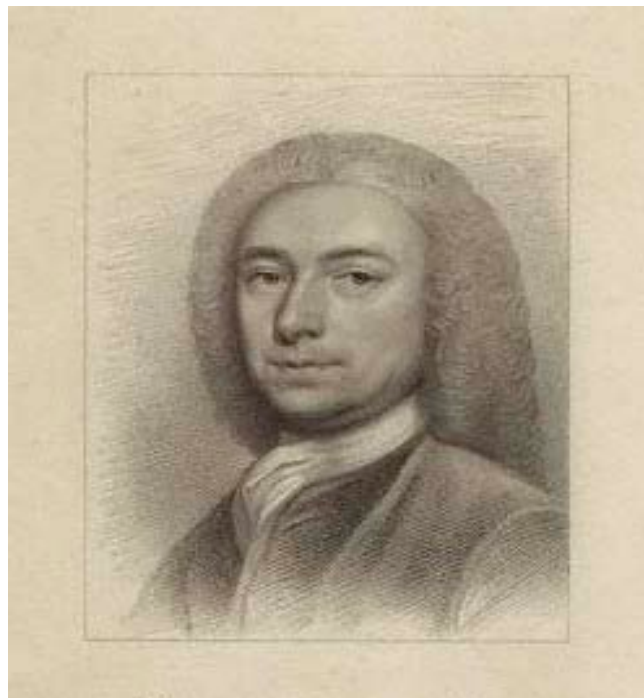
John Duncombe by Joseph Highmore (Oil on canvas, 1766)
Courtesy of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge



William Warburton by Charles Philips (Oil on canvas, circa 1737)
National Portrait Gallery, London



William Strahan by Charles Algernon Tomkins, published by Henry Graves, after
Sir Joshua Reynolds (Mezzotint, published 1866 (1780)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Thomas Edwards by William Holl, after Unknown artist (Stipple engraving,
published 1828)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Samuel Lobb by W. Hoare (Drawing with wash, 1755)
Location unknown (print can be found in 'The Lobb Family from the
Sixteenth Century' by G. Eland)



Edward Young by Joseph Highmore (Oil on canvas, 1754)
Courtesy of All Souls College, Oxford



John Boyle (Lord Orrery) 5th Earl of Cork and Orrery, attributed to Isaac Seeman (Oil on canvas, 1735-1745)
National Portrait Gallery, London



Aaron Hill published by Thomas Rodd the Elder (Line engraving, published 1 May 1818)
National Portrait Gallery, London

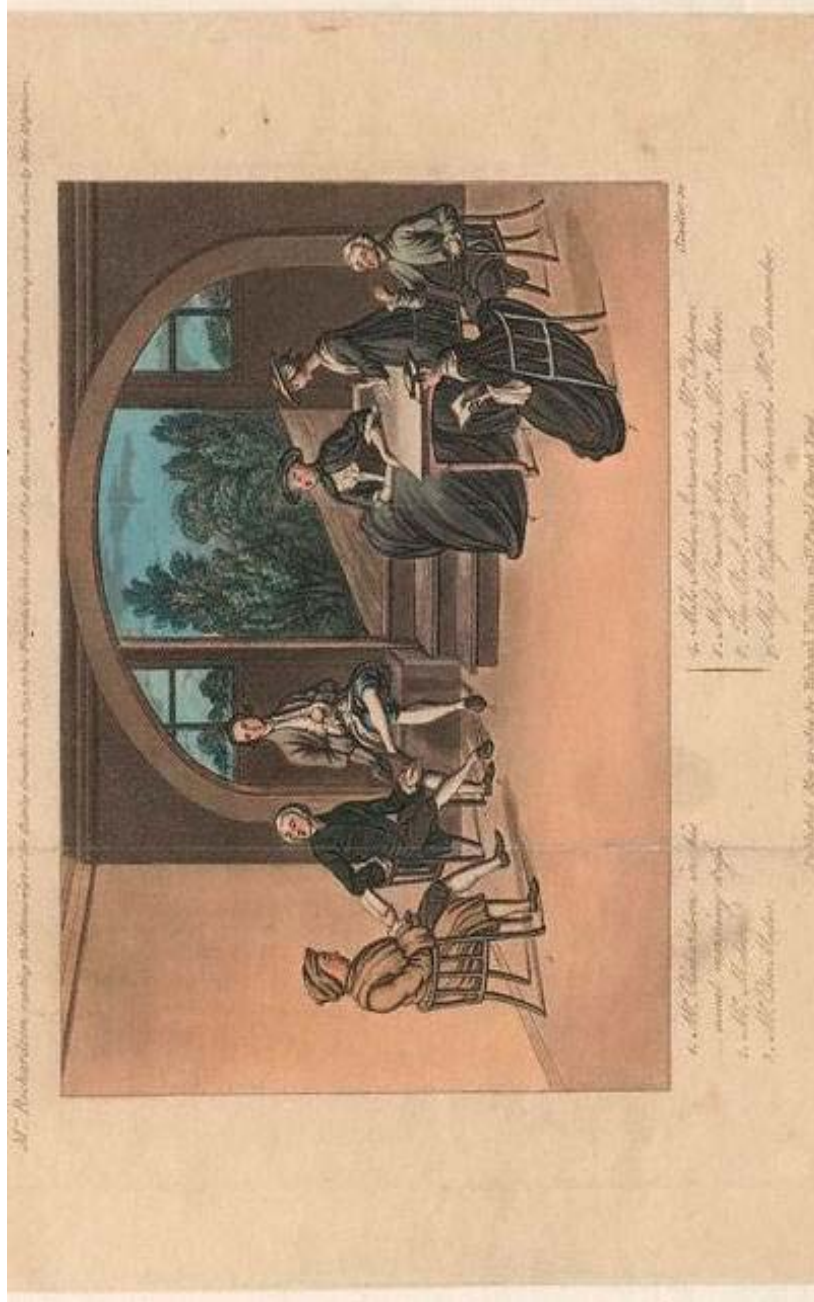


Sarah Wescomb painted in the circle of Thomas Hudson
(Oil on canvas, c.1780)

Courtesy of the Lucas-Scudamore Family, Kentchurch Court, Herefordshire



Lady Dorothy Bradshaigh
(Engraving, after C. Watson, no date)
Copied from volume V of *Correspondence*, ed. by Anna Laetitia Barbauld



'Mr. Richardson, reading the Manuscript of Sir Charles Grandison in 1751, to his Friends in the Grotto of his House at North End, from a drawing made at the time by Miss Highmore', by Joseph Constantine Stadler, after Miss Highmore (Colour acquatint, published 1804)

National Portrait Gallery, London

CHAPTER THREE

Sarah Scudamore (née Wescomb)¹

Of the many female correspondents with whom Richardson engaged throughout his life, Sarah Wescomb is unlike any of the others. So far as their letters confirm, their exchange was purely concerned with friendship, as Wescomb never exhibited any great literary ability, unlike many of his other correspondents such as Thomas Edwards, Aaron Hill or Hester Mulso. Wescomb was a young woman devoid of superciliousness or ostentation, without any ideas of fame or grandeur, who happened to catch Richardson's eye whilst on a trip to visit a friend. Her straightforward, but at times naïve nature, along with her buoyant and magnanimous attitude make her a paradoxical case study when considering Richardson's *penchant* for collecting eminent, high status fans. Sarah Wescomb offers little threat to Richardson's standing, and her mostly passive, dutiful, domestic and proper, though on occasion defiant, existence appeals to his idea of the innocent, obedient, self-effacing, though at times, tenacious young woman, much like his Clarissa Harlowe.² For Richardson, Wescomb arguably represents a living, breathing Clarissa.

The correspondence between Samuel Richardson and Sarah Wescomb (c.1730-1797) began sometime in 1746, after an introduction from Richardson's North End landlord, Samuel Vanderplank.³ Wescomb and Vanderplank's second

¹ The spelling of Sarah Wescomb's surname is inconsistent. Barbauld uses two spellings 'Westcombe' (*The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison. Selected from the Original Manuscripts, Bequeathed by him to his Family, To which are prefixed, A Biographical Account of that Author, and Observations on his Writings*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1804) I, p. cxcix) and 'Westcomb' (Barbauld, III, 239); Eaves and Kimpel use 'Wescomb' throughout; Sir John Forster's handwritten sectioning of Richardson's *Correspondence* uses 'Wescomb' (FM XIV); and in the original Forster manuscripts she signs her name 'Wescomb' (for examples see FM XIV, 18, 37 and 38). Throughout this thesis I will follow Forster, Eaves and Kimpel, and Sarah Wescomb's own spelling of her name in the Forster manuscripts.

² *Clarissa*, and its heroine, begins as a simple, albeit long, story of passivity, duty, innocence, domesticity and propriety which, as soon as it enters the public sphere, is transformed into a shared, sexual, and beautiful celebrity in its own right. The novel attracted mass readership, both in England and on the Continent, with people using it as a means by which to evaluate, and live, their lives. For example, Lady Bradshaigh, both in her early days as Belfour, and after, references *Clarissa* constantly.

³ Richardson and Vanderplank shared the house at North-End; the Richardson family occupied one half of the house and the Vanderplanks the other. According to Barbauld (Barbauld, VI, 317) the Richardson's occupied the side of the house that is 'nearest the eye' in the plate that appears in volume IV of Barbauld's edition.

daughter Ann were close friends, and after Ann's reluctance to correspond with Richardson, Wescomb took up the mantle and enjoyed a consistent correspondence with him for over twelve years.⁴ Eaves and Kimpel tell us that the first extant letter between them is dated 22 August 1746 and it is from Wescomb to Richardson.⁵ Other than the information found in Richardson's *Correspondence*, and the observations gleaned from it by Eaves and Kimpel, little is known about Sarah Wescomb. Anna Barbauld is only able to spare her two-and-a-half lines in the introduction to her edition of Richardson's letters (Barbauld, I, cxcix). Wescomb's family home was at Enfield in Hertfordshire, which she shared with her ailing mother, Mary, one of Richardson's 'honorary sisters', and Betsy Johnson whom Eaves and Kimpel suggest was her step-sister.⁶ Wescomb's father, Daniel, had died in 1731, and six years later her mother married James Jobson who, on his death sometime before 1746, left her a substantial fortune. Unlike many of 'Richardson's young ladies', Sarah Wescomb 'was not bookish', and even though she is articulate in her letters, the lack of contemporary literary reference reflects this.⁷ Eaves and Kimpel harshly describe her letter exchange with Richardson as 'almost barren of substance' and 'as repetitious and trivial as possible.'⁸ In Sarah Wescomb we see a young woman concerned with chatter, a malleable innocent for Richardson to shape into the adoring fan. Even though, in intellectual terms, Eaves and Kimpel's opinion of the Richardson-Wescomb letters is reasonable, the arguments and 'raillery' that they refer to in their biography surely point to a young woman of independent mind who is willing to participate in such repartee and challenge a reputed male novelist, at least thirty-five years her senior.⁹ In contrast, Barbauld's succinct description of Wescomb offers a different side to her character: 'Miss Westcombe's letters shew great sweetness, modesty, and the highest reverence for her adopted father.'¹⁰ Richardson certainly engineered this correspondence and

⁴ T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 198.

⁵ Richardson's policy was for the lady to approach him first, particularly if they were young or titled.

⁶ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 198. Eaves and Kimpel report that her mother was 'afflicted by gout' (p. 198).

⁷ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 198.

⁸ Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 198-199.

⁹ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 199.

¹⁰ Barbauld, I, p. cxcix.

Eaves and Kimpel tell us that 'By October [1746] he had visited her *'delightful Villa'*, a remarkable feat for a man who, by comparison, rarely travelled, and 'was sending the first volume of the manuscript of *Clarissa* [to her] in hopes that she would indicate its faults'.¹¹ Despite Eaves and Kimpel's claims that Wescomb 'was not bookish' Richardson sent her drafts of *Clarissa* for correction and so involved an amateur in his editing process.¹² Richardson's previous and, at this time, only other venture as a novelist had garnered him both praise and criticism, the latter of which he had found difficult to manage, because it highlighted his insecurities about status and popularity. Richardson's decision to invite Sarah Wescomb to critique his draft novel provided him with the opportunity to hear the opinions of a member of his target audience - after all Wescomb was the type of woman that was likely to read his work. The invitation also imbued his new correspondent with a sense of importance that such an eminent writer had asked for her opinion.¹³ This inverted flattery would in due course, as it had done with Edwards, lead to the cyclical gift-giving process highlighted in Mauss's thesis of the *kula*. John Carroll also takes an interest in the gift-giving transaction by noting that he 'rewarded the 'few' with the first glimpses of his manuscripts, so these friends rewarded him with the interest and assurance he needed'.¹⁴

Barbauld's introduction to Wescomb comes at the beginning of eighteen letters between her and Richardson, ranging from the first letter dated 6 March 1746-7 (Richardson to Wescomb), to the final letter dated 12 March 1758 (Scudamore to Richardson)', written nineteen months after her marriage to John Scudamore.¹⁵ The relationship develops quickly and within a few months Wescomb is signing off her letters with the pet names 'Sar. Westcomb', 'Sarh. Wescomb, or Selena ad Libit[um]'.¹⁶ By 5 March 1747, and 'with Mamma's approval', Wescomb was

¹¹ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 198.

¹² Eaves and Kimpel, p. 198.

¹³ Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 198-199. Most people who were invited by Richardson to offer suggestions on his works did so, after the necessary polite hesitancy, with the exception of Frances Grainger who declined his offer (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 200). Wescomb proposed 'several longish cuts'.

¹⁴ John Carroll, ed, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 30.

¹⁵ However, the information gathered by Eaves and Kimpel tells us that the earliest extant letter is dated 22 August 1746, and that their correspondence continued until at least 10 May 1760 (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 637 and p. 703).

¹⁶ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 198.

referring to herself as Richardson's daughter and vowing to lead her life according to *Clarissa*.¹⁷

When looking at the Wescomb-Richardson correspondence found in Anna Laetitia Barbauld's edition, I will move chronologically, following Barbauld's lead, and focus fully on some letters while omitting sections from others where events reported are insignificant or repetitious. Unusually, the first three letters that Barbauld selects are from Richardson, and only in the first instance does she attempt to assign a date (6 March 1746-7).¹⁸ Richardson's first letter is immediately familiar, confirming the argument that it had probably been written later than 1746 which was when he and Wescomb first met. Barbauld opens with what seems to be a response from Richardson to Wescomb, thanking her for compliments that she may have paid to him in a previous letter and warning her to 'make me not vain'.¹⁹ As with all of Richardson's correspondence, he demonstrates an unrelenting need for them to show gratitude to him for deigning to write to them. However, it does not finish there for Richardson and he perpetuates the ever-increasing circle of compliments:

And could I not, ought I not, unless I had a very great share of vanity indeed, to be diffident of the acceptableness of the truly charming relationship which you honoured me with to your good mamma, til her goodness, in so kind and distinguishing a manner, confirmed it? There can be no merit without diffidence; and I was going to say (if it were not to do dishonour to distinctions which it shall be my endeavour to deserve) diffidence is all the merit I have. I have more friends than my dear L. who think more highly of me than I deserve: and I always endeavour, when I meet them with their kind praises, though I doubt not their sincerity, to middle the matter between that and their own partiality; and so am

¹⁷ Barbauld, III, 261. Eaves and Kimpel, p. 198.

¹⁸ Barbauld, III, 239. Before calendar reform in 1752, the civil year officially ran from 25 March – 24 March therefore many correspondences dated 1 January– 23 March will appear to belong to the previous year. Barbauld's elusive dating is clearly wrong because the earliest extant letter found by Eaves and Kimpel, amongst the Forster manuscripts that Barbauld was working from, only goes back as far as 22 August 1746 (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 637). Suffice to say, therefore, that the possibility of Richardson's letter being written on 6 March 1746 is impracticable, and it is far more likely to have been written a year later in 1747 which is when Eaves and Kimpel date it. The following two letters are undated by Barbauld, but Eaves and Kimpel attempt to place them at '[Late September?]' 1746, for her second selected letter, and '15 Sept.' 1746, for her third selected letter, which they claim has been 'part cut' by Barbauld (Barbauld, III, 224-249, and Eaves and Kimpel, p. 637. Barbauld, III, 250-255, and Eaves and Kimpel, p. 637).

¹⁹ Barbauld, III, 239-240.

guarded against growing vain by the effects of their goodness.²⁰

Richardson's supposed shyness is negated by his willingness to discuss it. His use of hyperbole when referring to his friends, and their opinion of him, manages to discredit his modesty further. Richardson continues to flatter Sarah Wescomb and her family and relates to her that he is able to envisage her daily activities because he has visited her home and shared in 'your charming situation at Enfield'.²¹ His main point of flattery here is to tell her that even though he misses her company, he is never lonely or far away because, having once been a part of it, he can escape into the memory of her world. As the letter draws to a close, Richardson lets his recipient know that he will write more when he is less 'hurried in business'.²²

The next letter, again from Richardson, focuses on the delights of letter writing, and the prospect of a friend 'retiring to her closet', after a day filled with the demands of life.²³ He suggests that writing letters 'perpetuate[s], the ever agreeable and innocent pleasures that flow from social love, from hearts united by the same laudable ties.'²⁴ Richardson uses language of affectionate friendship to lay the foundation for further praise of Wescomb and states that 'This correspondence is, indeed, the cement of friendship[...]more pure, yet more ardent[...]from the very preparation to, and action of writing', before moving on to tell her that her letter is an example of this.²⁵ Richardson claims that, due to the quality of her letter, it is as if she is there with him, and he proceeds to deliver an uncomfortable appraisal of his imaginings:

While I read it, I have you before me in person: I converse with you, and your dear Anna, as arm-in-arm you traverse the happy terrace: kept myself at humble distance, more by my own true respect for you both, than by your swimming robes: I would say hoops, but that I love not the mechanic word!--I see you, I sit with you, I talk with you, I read to you, I stop to hear your

²⁰ Barbauld, III, 240. I am assuming 'My dear L.' stands for 'my dear Ladies' - his group of female correspondents.

²¹ Barbauld, III, 241.

²² Barbauld, III, 243.

²³ Barbauld, III, 244.

²⁴ Barbauld, III, 244-245.

²⁵ Barbauld, III, 245.

sentiments, in the summer-house: your smiling obligingness, your polite and easy expression, even your undue diffidence, are all in my eye and my ear as I read.----Who then shall decline the converse of the pen? The pen that makes distance, presence; and brings back to sweet remembrance all the delights of presence; which makes even presence but body, while absence becomes the soul; and leaves no room for the intrusion of break-fast calls, or dinner or supper direction, which often broke in upon us.²⁶

Even though there is absolutely no evidence of impropriety on Richardson's behalf with any of his 'adopted Daughters', the intimacy shown here, albeit at a distance, is noticeably uncomfortable.²⁷ This method of praising Wescomb inveigles her, ensuring her future admiration of him. Richardson admits to watching and listening intently to Wescomb, and the suggestion is that his observations are then committed to paper. In observing Wescomb he is compelled to immortalise her in writing: arguably, Sarah Wescomb is his *Clarissa Harlowe*. For Richardson, the information laid down by the pen can surpass all problems of distance, or absence. For him, writing can make a thing present and can fill the void between meetings, so Richardson advocates it as a means of avoiding interruption and enabling continuity. Richardson compares Wescomb and *Clarissa Harlowe* by admitting that the 'intellectual pleasures' and 'theoretic knowledge' shown by Wescomb in her letter-writing ability, is what he had hoped to instil in his heroine.²⁸ Richardson is quick to point out that if he were younger then his words would be 'dangerous', but as he is safe in his status as an older paternal figure, he is prepared to forge ahead and 'banish' Wescomb's own shyness.²⁹ Richardson then embarks upon a soliloquy not dissimilar to the one in his first letter; he bolsters himself under the guise of bolstering her. The concluding paragraph serves to reassure Wescomb that a long and involved letter should never be apologised for, and that any true friend would be grateful for, and supportive of, such a friend and her needs.³⁰

²⁶ Barbauld, III, 246.

²⁷ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 485.

²⁸ Barbauld, III, 247.

²⁹ Barbauld, III, 248.

³⁰ Barbauld, III, 249.

Richardson opens his next letter by chastising Wescomb once again about her 'diffident' demeanour and 'the liberties' that she takes with herself, and begins another debate on the virtues of letter writing.³¹ Wescomb's friend, 'your beloved Anna', had written a few lines to Richardson, but had since received nothing at all from her.³² In the short letter that Ann had written to him, she had prompted Richardson to write a letter 'to Kent, wither her papa and she went'; Richardson claims to have written this letter but says that he received no reply.³³ We witness Richardson attempting to salvage a modicum of self respect by alluding to Ann Vanderplank's 'diffidence'.³⁴ Richardson tries to seduce 'the dear Anna' into corresponding with him, by allying himself with Wescomb and asking her to pass on the message that 'the pen is almost the only means a very modest and diffident lady[...]has to shew herself, and prove that she has a *mind*'.³⁵ In these letters Richardson is eager to recruit two young women to join his increasing number of correspondents, and in Wescomb he has found an eager disciple. Ann Vanderplank's disinterest surprised Richardson and he spends the entire letter, written for both Wescomb and her friend, constructing a case for himself, as well as for the significance of epistolary communication:

Tell the dear Anna, and be pleased yourself, my dear, to know, that the pen is almost the only means a very modest and diffident lady (who in company will not attempt to glare) has to shew herself, and prove that she has a *mind*. Set any of the gay flutterers and prattlers of the tea-table to write---I beseech you, set them to write---and what will they demonstrate, but that they can do nothing but prate away?---And shall a modest lady have nothing but her silence to commend her? Silence indeed to me is a commendation, when worthy subjects offer not, and nothing but goose-like gabble is going forward [...] but the pen will shew soul and meaning too.---Retired, the modest lady, happy in herself; happy in the

³¹ This third letter, which runs to six pages, is undated by Barbauld. Eaves and Kimpel date it as 15 September 1746 because they are able to connect Richardson's travelling activities referred to in the letter with the historical evidence found in the Forster manuscripts (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 637). Barbauld, III, 250-251.

³² Barbauld, III, 250. The 'Anna' that is referred to here is presumably Ann Vanderplank who, as we have already established, declined to take up a regular correspondence with Richardson.

³³ Barbauld, III, 251.

³⁴ Barbauld, III, 251. Diffidence seems to be the favoured word of Richardson's when alluding to unfavourable behaviour in these young women; he attempts to denigrate them gently by alluding to their lack of confidence.

³⁵ Barbauld, III, 252.

choice she makes of the dear correspondent of her own sex [...] Shall she refuse to give herself [...] Shall she deny herself a style[...]Hard, very hard, would she think it, if our sex were to make a law to deny her the opportunities she denies herself! [...]

But the difficulty will be in the choice of correspondent. If our sex, and artful, a designing, an indelicate heart endeavour to obtrude itself upon hearts so diffident, so modest, so worthy: if a person be capable of endeavouring to warp such worthy hearts from their duty[...]then let him be shunned, avoided, and treated with contempt.³⁶

Richardson's love of writing is fully exposed here as he explains the virtues of it to both women. He intimates that idle gossipers, if given the opportunity to write, will only ever talk nonsense, but the pen has much more to offer if it is in the right hands: the hands of the unassuming and shy young woman. This young woman will have time to think about what she wants to say, to cogitate over it before selecting the appropriate words and committing them to paper. Richardson's verbose lesson on the benefits of entering into a correspondence with the opposite sex serves two purposes. In the first instance it assists Richardson in his attempt at saving face, and in the second instance it acts as an instructive tool for Wescomb and Vanderplank to contemplate and adhere to. It teaches them that interaction with members of the opposite sex will offer them difference, an alternative source of stimulation away from the nonsense of tea-time gossipers. They will learn about silence from men and about the importance of taking time to speak only when there is something worthwhile to speak about. For Richardson, the pen allows time for thought, it provokes thought. Richardson concludes the letter by thanking Wescomb's mother for allowing the correspondence to be established, because without her permission it could not have proceeded. Before closing off his letter, Richardson cannot help but deliver one final riposte to his rejector. When acknowledging Wescomb's mother for granting permission for the correspondence, he praises Wescomb for what he assumes would have been her reaction had her mother not sanctioned it, and then sarcastically thanks Ann Vanderplank for her role in it also:

³⁶ Barbauld, III, 252-254.

I am extremely obliged to your honoured mamma for her favourable notice and approbation of a correspondence, that would have been censurably begun without her leave, had it not carried unexceptionableness in the very face of it. If it had not, I am sure her beloved and dutiful daughter would not have given it the least countenance; nor would the worthy and prudent, and equally dutiful Anna have given it her sanction, though she is so loth to contribute to it by her pen. I beg my most respectful compliments to the good lady. I hope her journey has given her health; and then you must both have had high delight in each other. For, my dear, a wise and indulgent parent, and a child grateful and sensible of that indulgence, must give hourly pleasures to each other: pleasures, if possible, more poignant and exalted than those of friendship, exalted as those are; since friendship is included in such a harmony: reverence on one side can be no impediment, because paternal or maternal love and condescension require nothing of that but what is equally reputable to be shown.³⁷

Even though Richardson is talking directly to Wescomb and her mother, he is at the same time letting Vanderplank know that her friendship with Wescomb pales into insignificance alongside the relationship between Wescomb and her mother, who had been 'wise and indulgent' enough to trust her daughter to engage in a correspondence with him.³⁸ Richardson asserts that the pleasures shared between a parent and a child greatly outweigh those shared between friends. In addition, in the role that he will soon assume - as the new self-appointed, adopted father to Wescomb - he is making it clear to Vanderplank that he also stands to benefit from this filial connection.³⁹ The competitive streak shown by Richardson only serves to heighten his desire for status, and he also includes a warning to Wescomb in terms of what is expected of her in her new role: filial obedience. In return he promises 'hourly pleasures', by which we can only assume he means the fulfilment of duty; deference; intimate connection which only a trustworthy parent can provide; emotional assurance and dependability.⁴⁰

³⁷ Barbauld, III, 255.

³⁸ Barbauld, III, 255.

³⁹ Barbauld, III, 255. Throughout the Wescomb correspondence she refers to Richardson as a parent, father, or adopted father (for examples see Barbauld, III, 258-259).

⁴⁰ Barbauld, III, 255. The 'hourly pleasures' promised here by Richardson also require reciprocation from Wescomb.

The first letter selected by Barbauld from Sarah Wescomb to Richardson, written from Enfield on 27 June 1750, begins a fluent sequence of letters between them. Barbauld's inclusion of the three previously disordered letters may seem out of place, but by including them she pre-empts any questions of impropriety on Richardson's part from her new audience, establishing him as a man who understands the importance of etiquette and approved behaviour. He portrays himself as a caring man who understands the importance of the male role model to a fatherless girl (Sarah's father, Daniel Wescomb, had died in 1731), and by including them in her edition, Barbauld has offered him a voice in the nineteenth century. Even though Richardson and Wescomb shared a continued correspondence Barbauld has elected not to include all the letters. In this first selected letter we see a trusting and intimate communication, written some four years after the snub from Ann Vanderplank.⁴¹ The relationship between Wescomb and Richardson has evidently moved on, but Wescomb is continuing to refer to Richardson as 'my dear papa'.⁴² The letter is appropriately polite, giving Richardson the accepted amount of gratitude and respect while Wescomb exhibits both courage and delicacy in her writing. Wescomb has overcome an illness, and she is acknowledging Richardson's 'humanity and goodness' for the concern that he has shown to 'us invalids'.⁴³ Richardson had visited Enfield and Wescomb apologises for 'the disagreeable time you had here', but coyly asks him if he would visit them again, promising to make the visit 'more tolerable' for him.⁴⁴ In an attempt to get him to visit, Wescomb employs her own forms of persuasion by flattering Richardson into submission:

I must own self-interest prompts me to make this request. And though I love to be excited by more generous motives, I think herein I am excusable, as your conversation is equally improving and delightful;

⁴¹ At least twenty-eight letters passed between them during the period 8 October 1746 and 27 June 1750, and according to Eaves and Kimpel's catalogue of extant letters, the most prolific exchange of letters occurred in 1747 in which they exchanged a total of thirteen. In 1746 they exchanged three; in 1748 they exchanged six; in 1749 there was only one letter sent (from Wescomb to Richardson); and in 1750 (up to and including 27 June) there were five exchanges. Even though it would appear that their correspondence had fractured in 1749 the contents of the first letter back in 1750 suggests otherwise, so we can safely assume that letters from 1749 are either lost or were disposed of by Richardson during his selection process.

⁴² On the 26 August 1756 Richardson gave Wescomb away at her wedding to John Scudamore, which took place at St. George's Church in Hanover Square, London.

⁴³ Barbauld, III, 256.

⁴⁴ Barbauld, III, 257.

so that, if I have not bettered, from frequently enjoying this happy advantage, I can attribute it only to myself, in not having a memory to retain, and a genius to improve by it; but what I can, I will. So, dear Sir, be not wanting on your part: for much I have to learn.⁴⁵

Wescomb's candid approach is intended to seduce Richardson into visiting her, and the additional compliments to his conversational prowess increase the allure. Wescomb's self-deprecating position renders her subservient to him, but she seems content in this position as long as her intention is realised. The remainder of the letter is concerned with her mother's decline, and her own anxiety at having to watch the deterioration. For Wescomb this is a 'Hard trial!', as the thoughts of losing 'so invaluable a parent, friend, and adviser' fill her with dread.⁴⁶ Wescomb reiterates to Richardson, her 'second parent', that she had warned him about the type of letter that she had written, that it is 'dull, serious, perhaps stupid', but despite being 'melancholy' she readily admits that she leads a very agreeable life and has no need to 'envy the gay inhabitants, as I may call them, of Ranelagh's lofty dome, or Vauxhall's rural scenes.'⁴⁷ As if to gain favour with Richardson, she is quick to attest that if she were close to 'these places, I should never frequent them', even though she knows that Richardson would not 'condemn my sometimes attending public places in moderation'.⁴⁸ Wescomb attempts to defend her '*innocent pleasures*', and invites Richardson to enlighten her as to his thoughts on the subject.⁴⁹ As Wescomb's letter draws to a close, she is keen to reassure Richardson that he is not 'too soft with me' and points out to him that he has said that 'those you love most, you never fail, on occasion, to reprove' (which is why she does not want to be near him when he reads 'this trash').⁵⁰ The '*innocent pleasures*' for which Wescomb wants Richardson's approval are minor indulgences.⁵¹ With the influx of gossip and scandal being made increasingly public in Wescomb's early years, as well as the increasing prominence of women in the social sphere, she is likely to have encountered adult conversations bearing

⁴⁵ Barbauld, III, 257.

⁴⁶ Barbauld, III, 258.

⁴⁷ Barbauld, III, 259.

⁴⁸ Barbauld, III, 259.

⁴⁹ Barbauld, III, 259-260.

⁵⁰ Barbauld, III, 260-261.

⁵¹ Barbauld, III, 260.

intimations of rumour, excitement and subsequent judgement. In her study *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, Amanda Vickery offers an insight into the experiences of women of Wescomb's social status:

Yet the household and family were not the limit of an elite woman's horizon. Nor was the house in any simple sense a private, domestic sphere. Indeed, the idea that the home was a refuge insulated from the social world is one that would have perplexed the well-established in this period. Genteel families were linked to the world in a multiplicity of ways, as kinsfolk, landowners, patrons, employers and as members of the elite. All these social roles were expressed through a variety of encounters which took place in the home. Open-handed hospitality was still crucial to the maintenance of social credit and political power, and, as mistress of ceremony, the elite hostess might wield considerable practical power from the head of her dining-table [...] Politeness was a tool which a well-born woman could use to extend her reach [...] A polite lady also laid claim to wider cultural horizons through reading and through cultural consumption on an unprecedented scale. The domesticated of the morning were the polite adventurers of the afternoon.⁵²

Elite women of the eighteenth century were embedded in a network of visits where politeness and sociability became key factors in the growth of public institutions that were to offer spaces of propriety and entertainment. Vickery lists them for us ('assembly rooms, concert series, theatre seasons, circulating libraries, clubs, urban walks, pleasure gardens, and sporting fixtures'), before confirming that 'From the early eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century the core of public entertainment remained remarkably constant.'⁵³

Even though very little is known of Sarah Wescomb's life at Enfield, we can assume that her connection to the Vanderplanks, as well as the knowledge that Jobson had left an ample subsidy in his will, ensures that her family were of reasonable wealth and social status. As Vickery explains, women of the period were able to use their home to catch up on gossip, to form and air opinions and, for the young female members of the household, explore and imagine future

⁵² Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 9-10.

⁵³ Vickery, p. 9.

aspirations.⁵⁴ The eighteenth century woman found her social and cultural life enriched by the expansion and growing acceptance of the ‘cultural institutions’ that Vickery lists, furthermore, she was expected to partake in these public activities which were concerned with gratification, enjoyment and satisfaction.⁵⁵ It would appear that the blissful nature of pleasure was almost the divine right of the privileged woman, but propriety within these institutions remained a priority and Vickery highlights the concerns found within ‘the sprawling pleasure gardens’, stating that ‘Promiscuous sociability in the company of strangers was anathema [...] so those venues that promoted open access [...] were obvious targets for criticism’.⁵⁶ In *Masquerade and Civilisation: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth Century English Culture and Fiction*, Terry Castle focuses primarily on the concept of the masquerade in the period, but it is also possible to extend her hypothesis to the congenial activities of the pleasure garden indulged in more generally by a public not overtly attending a masked occasion. Castle offers an illuminating insight into the eighteenth century ‘notion of the self’ and its pursuit of pleasure which was often played out at locations such as Ranelagh and Vauxhall, and she argues that:

New bodies were superimposed over old; anarchic, theatrical selves displaced supposedly essential ones; masks, or personae, obscured persons [...] One became the other in an act of ecstatic impersonation. The true self remained elusive and inaccessible – illegible – within its fantastical encasements [...] The pleasure of the masquerade attended on the experience of doubleness, the alienation of inner from outer, a fantasy of two bodies simultaneously and thrillingly present, self and other together, the two-in-one. If, as one commentator has suggested, the eighteenth century was an “age of disguise,” the masquerade – with its sensuous, exquisite duplicities, its shimmering liquid play on the themes of self-presentation and self-concealment – must take its place among the exemplary phenomena of the period.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Eaves and Kimpel tell us that Wescomb’s mother was the ‘daughter of a South Sea director’ who ‘had married Daniel Wescomb, also in the South Sea Company’, and that six years after his death in 1731, ‘she married James Jobson, who died before 1746, leaving her ‘a widow lady of a large fortune.’ (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 198).

⁵⁵ Vickery, p. 9.

⁵⁶ Vickery, p. 279.

⁵⁷ Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilisation: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (London: Methuen & Co., 1986), p. 5.

For the public attending the pleasure garden there was the opportunity for self-reinvention as the once private domestic woman entered a sphere fascinated by, and obsessed with voyeurism. As Vickery suggests, 'the domesticated [women] of the morning were the polite adventurers of the afternoon' who became the respectable *fashionista* ready to greet her public.⁵⁸ The concept of celebrity was potentially available to those who ventured into the public arena of the pleasure garden, but it was those graced with youth and beauty that were particularly poised to reap its most coveted rewards. By venturing into the public sphere, the eighteenth century woman was, as Castle predicts, able to bring along her domestic self coupled with her public self, the one disguising the other, and by doing so a different kind of masquerade to the one Castle offers comes into play: the new part-time domestic female is allowed to masquerade as a very public figure. The idea of public and private representations of the self is described by Vivien Jones in her introduction to *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*. Jones opens her edition with a death notice taken from the *Morning Chronicle* January 1794. For Jones the rhetorical language persuades its reader to imagine the subject (Mrs. Barclay) as a 'particularly virtuous, woman, an individual example which gives us a glimpse into the life lived by women of her class at the end of the eighteenth century'.⁵⁹ However, Jones pushes this further and uncovers the possibility that the 'strangely generalized' account leaves her friends and family remembering 'a characterless paragon, a representative of her sex' that 'conform[s] to a dominant eighteenth-century ideal of femininity'.⁶⁰ The example illustrates the duplicity that Castle describes by stating that:

Mrs. Barclay is subsumed by 'Mrs. Barclay', a character in a conventional moral narrative constructed for public consumption. In other words, what we are faced with here is not a factual account, but a representation; not actuality but ideology, a distinction which has important implications for the way we use texts which[...]appear to give us accurate documentary evidence about a historical period.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Vickery, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Vivien Jones, ed, *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 2.

⁶⁰ Jones, p. 2.

⁶¹ Jones, p. 2.

Arguably, this is the result of what Castle and Vickery describe; that the construction of the other self, the public self, exhibited at locations such as the pleasure garden, becomes a useful apparatus for future symbolic images to be built upon which are, in turn, played out in the public press. The notion of the ideal is planted in the psyche as an exemplar by which to live one's life, which is also offered to posterity. Nancy Armstrong impugns the written word for its combative attempts at 'redefining the female', by stating that:

By the mid-eighteenth century, new forms of writing were contending with those that had long dominated English thinking, each claiming the right to declare what features made a woman most desirable. The sheer volume of print already devoted to the project of redefining the female indicates that by that time a massive ideological struggle was underway.⁶²

These 'new forms of writing' included the works of Richardson who, for Armstrong, had assisted in 'rescuing both the female and the domestic life she superintended from their fate at the hands of degenerate authors' that had come before him.⁶³ He set about using the genre of 'fiction for redefining the desirable woman', and if the reactions of most of his fans are to be considered he appears, if only for a short time, to have succeeded.⁶⁴ Richardson's cross-examination of Wescomb's enquiry into innocent pleasure is, simply, a by-product of his own literary aspirations.

Within five days of Wescomb's last letter, Richardson replies with a nine page letter. Dated 2 July 1750, the letter opens with Richardson telling Wescomb how her previous letter had 'affect[ed] and 'grieve[d]' him with her concern for her mother, but not to be too unduly alarmed.⁶⁵ Richardson's tone is buoyant, and it is designed to lift Wescomb's spirit as he celebrates the possibility of 'continued life, if not complete health, to such a happy parent'.⁶⁶ Richardson, because he has witnessed it, is confident that Wescomb adequately equipped to behave

⁶² Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 96.

⁶³ Armstrong, p. 97.

⁶⁴ Armstrong, p. 97.

⁶⁵ Barbauld, III, 261-262.

⁶⁶ Barbauld, III, 262.

sensitively and appropriately under the circumstances. He spends some time reassuring Wescomb of this by offering her specific sentences to say, should she need them, but he is quick to apologise for ‘put [ting] words in the mouth of a young lady’ who is capable of writing as well as she does.⁶⁷ Richardson moves on to Wescomb’s coveting of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, remarking that he is curious to know ‘What advantages has either of those places, but in the gay multitude, over your more truly rural scenes?’, and he wonders ‘What must the minds of those persons be, who can wish to live in a crowd?’.⁶⁸ Wescomb’s request for his opinion on the ‘*innocent pleasures*’ of the pleasure garden has provided Richardson with the opportunity to offer a two and a half page commentary about the impiety of them.⁶⁹ Richardson believes that while it is acceptable to visit them occasionally, to visit them frequently is ‘to live for the eye and the ear only’, to indulge in, and be seduced by, gossip.⁷⁰ For Richardson these adventures should only ever serve to increase a lady’s understanding and execution of duty, to offer a change of scene which will enhance the virtues of home. Once these excursions have made ‘the in-door duties pall; and the mind hankers after opportunities of looking out for itself, then are such amusements dangerous: then cease they to be innocent.’⁷¹ Richardson’s main argument here concerns itself with moderation. For him, there is a place for public adventure, and he concurs that it is an important and necessary part of a young woman’s education, but he stresses that ‘to frequent them, in the proper sense of the word, is to make by degrees the duties of life and the domestic pleasures, pains, and irksome.’⁷² The fear is that public pleasure will greatly outweigh the pleasure a woman can find in the space of her own domestic world.⁷³ Richardson’s parental didacticism is developed in a vignette in the hope that Wescomb will learn the complexities of the word ‘moderation’.⁷⁴ The scene is set to show how ‘persons deceive themselves in the application of it to themselves, by looking forward to those who are immoderately fond of public appearance’.⁷⁵ Richardson lambastes Wescomb for the ‘glorious

⁶⁷ Barbauld, III, 262-264.

⁶⁸ Barbauld, III, 265.

⁶⁹ Barbauld, III, 260. Barbauld, III, 265-268.

⁷⁰ Barbauld, III, 266.

⁷¹ Barbauld, III, 266-267.

⁷² Barbauld, III, 265-266.

⁷³ Richardson’s literary message, and therefore success, is largely based upon dependant women.

⁷⁴ Barbauld, III, 267.

⁷⁵ Barbauld, III, 267.

part' she has chosen, and begins a sardonic rant denigrating her attitude toward the nursing and appreciation of her mother.⁷⁶ In the next breath he applauds her for providing him with little opportunity for reprimand. He is at odds with himself and tries to encourage her to continue along the path of care and respect for her mother so that she has no regrets 'when [...] she shall be called upon to resign to the common lot', and at the same time he warns her against juvenile and complacent attitudes toward filial responsibility in times of need.⁷⁷ Richardson brings his 'long letter, close written, and in nervous paroxysm' to a close with apologies for its 'imperfections' and blessings of good health for them all.⁷⁸ After signing off his letter, Richardson adds that he and his wife had received a visit from 'Mrs. J' (the wife of Richardson's landlord, Mrs. Ann Vanderplank-Jodrell), and that she had informed the Richardsons that Wescomb was due to visit them at their home in Ankerwyke; Richardson makes it clear to Wescomb that he expects to host them all first at North End.⁷⁹

The next letter, dated 26 July 1750, is from Wescomb to Richardson. In it she reports that her mother has hired 'a chair from London' to carry her around the estate and, so as to keep her mother company, she walks alongside it and is therefore hardly ever indoors and able to write.⁸⁰ However, on this occasion she has abandoned her mother in order to write to her adopted father, and she hopes that he will not chastise her for this. The letter explains that Wescomb has been unable to visit the Richardsons at North End, and she makes it clear that she will not be visiting anyone else (the Vanderplank-Jodrells) until she has been to them. The Wescombs have had visitors at Enfield (the Gunning sisters), who have now departed in search of more entertainment than Enfield could provide. Wescomb enjoys a moment of rancour which, again, she hopes Richardson will not reprimand her for:

May toupees, powder, lace, and essence (the composition of the modern pretty fellows) follow them in troops, to stare, and be stared at, till the more bashful youths give the first blush! I cannot suppose you will

⁷⁶ Barbauld, III, 268.

⁷⁷ Barbauld, III, 268-269.

⁷⁸ Barbauld, III, 269.

⁷⁹ Barbauld, III, 270. Ankerwyke near Wraybury in Surrey was the Vanderplank-Jodrell family home.

⁸⁰ Barbauld, III, 271-272.

censure me as either envious or ill-natured, in writing thus freely; since, as to the former (if I were weak enough), they are so far out of the reach of any competition, that it is needless to say any thing in my excuse, self being out of the case: and I likewise think I may be allowed to add, without eating one sour grape with the fox in the fable, that I would not for all their advantages of person change conditions: indeed I would not, if it were possible, on any consideration, though at present I know nothing essentially bad of them, as to fact, but a disposition and situation in life too apt to lead them astray.⁸¹

However much Wescomb protests her lack of bitterness, its presence is palpable, and she is relying on Richardson to join in. She acknowledges that she is in direct competition with the Gunnings, but distances herself from this possibility by suggesting she did not wish to change position with them under any circumstances. Wescomb appears to ventriloquise Richardson's words as she attempts to pursue a mature attitude by reflecting on herself and comprehending that 'notwithstanding I am far [...] from being what I wish [...] yet, having the use of reason to direct which path is best to tread in [...I am] prepared for every trial and event.'⁸² Before closing her letter Wescomb apologises to 'my best and good papa' for 'running on', and is concerned that her 'overflowings' are only interesting to her and no-one else.⁸³ She claims that Richardson 'licences my pen to flow, my heart and tongue to speak [...and] comforts and consoles [...with] never-failing tenderness and eloquence and concludes I am, dearest papa, Your sincere and unalterably affectionate daughter, friend, and obliging servant [...]'⁸⁴

Richardson replies to Wescomb's letter on 6 August 1750, and is overjoyed that her mother has decided to hire a 'London chair'.⁸⁵ He uses this, along with the change in weather through the winter, as a reason to invite the Wescombs to

⁸¹ Barbauld, III, 273-274. The Gunning sisters, Maria (1732-1760) and Elizabeth (1733-1790), became the Countess of Coventry (Maria) and the Duchess of Argyll (Elizabeth). Born into much less grandiose circumstances, their beauty helped to define them as eighteenth century publicly available ideals, enabling them to marry well. Known as 'The Beauties', and with a plethora of suitors in tow, they were propelled into the public eye becoming celebrities in their own right, and for the purposes of this thesis, they offer an interesting example of a different kind of celebrity to the one that Barbauld is constructing in Richardson.

⁸² Barbauld, III, 274.

⁸³ Barbauld, III, 274.

⁸⁴ Barbauld, III, 274-275.

⁸⁵ Barbauld, III, 275.

his home.⁸⁶ As we move through his letter, it becomes evident that Richardson has found opportunities in Wescomb's letter to 'chide' her, and again reminds her of her filial duties whilst also advocating that she should 'snatch a page or two of reading', but only because this will enhance future discourses between mother and daughter.⁸⁷ Richardson makes few demands on Wescomb at this time, reassuring her that her priority is her mother. He is eager for Wescomb to understand that her devotion now will reap great benefits in the future, and rewards her with the gift of praise: 'you are so very good, so laudably dutiful, that I might have spared the greatest part of what I have written.'⁸⁸ In most of Richardson's letters to Wescomb there is an even distribution of praise and criticism. In this letter, even though Richardson has reprimanded Wescomb for bemoaning having to entertain her mother, he also congratulates her for her 'whole conduct', including her commentary on the Gunning sisters which he elaborates on.⁸⁹ As well as recognizing the opportunity to indulge in gossip, Richardson also wants to relate a serious message to Wescomb about a young woman's reputation. He cites examples of other young women that he knows and aggressively builds upon Wescomb's hostility toward the Gunning sisters by claiming that:

The two sisters may justly suspect the address of every man who approaches them. They are already considered as the property of the public. Every eye has a right to them.

What is become of the delicacy of the sex, when a fair face, and fine features, without any other merit, shall allowably push girls into public life, and declaredly with a view to captivate---to make prey, I should rather say--of the first man they shall think considerable enough to support them in their glare and vanity? -- To my dear Lady B. I have wished them, and that in charity, the small-pox, if they have not had it; and that their faces might be seamed with it.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Barbauld, III, 275-276.

⁸⁷ Barbauld, III, 276-277.

⁸⁸ Barbauld, III, 278.

⁸⁹ Barbauld, III, 278-279.

⁹⁰ Barbauld, III, 280. It is worth noting that Richardson did have an interest in violence, self-harm and suicide. *Clarissa* has consistent flashes of violence throughout, as Carol Houlihan-Flynn has noted in her work *Samuel Richardson: A Man of Letters* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 33-34. Richardson was also obsessed with his health and frequently underwent aggressive treatment under the recommendation of his physician, George Cheyne (Houlihan-Flynn, p. 33). Houlihan suggests that Richardson, along with a significant number of his contemporaries, believed that suffering led to redemption. This way of thinking may have led

Richardson's commentary on public life shows great perspicacity, and his harsh warning to Wescomb is that pretty young ladies who are allowed unrestricted liberty soon become fodder for the public who will treat them as such. For Richardson, the Gunning sisters – or any young woman found to be in their position – are better off scarred by the small-pox and without public gaze, than beautiful, wondered at and idolized. Richardson's unusually acerbic comments and flagrant disregard for politeness here demonstrates his commitment to teaching Wescomb the importance of an untarnished female reputation, and his lucid understanding of the pitfalls of public life. He is predicting a downfall for the Gunning sisters and, as a celebrity author exposed to the highs and lows of being in the public domain, he wants to warn Wescomb against having such aspirations. Richardson is fully aware of both the positive and negative aspects of fame, and stresses here that the Gunning sisters have little or no talent with which to back up their projection onto the public, thus immediately rendering them susceptible to condemnation. From Richardson's reaction it would appear that he is apportioning blame to those who are engineering the Gunning sisters' demise, in this case their mother. It is her 'delicacy' that he is questioning, for she is 'allowably push[ing]' her daughters 'into public life' only ever with a view to capturing a man.⁹¹

The next letter is written by Sarah Wescomb and is dated 15 October 1750. Wescomb reports that she has been away at Ankerwyke – as promised, she had visited North End before travelling on – and has only just returned. While she was there she was unable to find time to write. The Richardsons had sent 'favours' to Wescomb and she thanks them for this, but she saves her greatest thanks for 'your kind remembrance of my mamma in the fruit you sent her', who 'ate forth your praise in every peach, grape, &c.'⁹² Wescomb recognizes that Richardson revels in the act of giving and congratulates him on his ingenuity 'in finding out ways to delight, and surprise'.⁹³ She describes her time spent at Ankerwyke, and begins with the assumption that Richardson is familiar with its charms, therefore deeming it unnecessary to describe it. Nonetheless she launches into an account of

Richardson to resent the idea of beauty being a right of passage into success and popularity, as well as it being valued over talent and industry.

⁹¹ Barbauld, III, 280.

⁹² Barbauld, III, 282.

⁹³ Barbauld, III, 282.

the place anyway, offering an idealised description of its inhabitants and the way in which she spent her days there.⁹⁴ At this point she remembers that she is writing to Richardson and asks him to give his opinion of her activities ‘for am I not your daughter, and permitted by adoption to call you father? Therefore is it not consistent with my duty to recount ingenuously all that passes?’⁹⁵ Wescomb has adopted this tell-all approach with her mother, and sees it as a way of learning; she therefore intends to adopt it with Richardson too.⁹⁶ As the letter draws to a close Wescomb describes, perhaps purely for Richardson’s benefit, her disappointment at her ‘dear papa’ for not travelling to Ankerwyke with her, particularly after she ‘would not go there till after my visit to North-End.’⁹⁷ Her concluding paragraph is mischievous and flirty with Wescomb describing herself as ‘saucy’.⁹⁸ She points out to Richardson that she understands that this behaviour is nothing new for her and knows that she has been forgiven for it in the past. In this buoyant letter, Sarah Wescomb not only seems to have forgotten who she is writing to, but has also forgotten herself as she has been caught up in the joys and independence of life away from Enfield.

Richardson takes seventeen days to reply to Wescomb, and on 1 November 1750 he addresses a letter to her. Richardson seems to have been pondering over the events reported in Wescomb’s last letter and spends eight pages answering it. He opens with a gentle reprimand, claiming that Wescomb has identified fault within herself, and has then managed to lay the blame on him.⁹⁹ Richardson swiftly moves on to the lack of letter writing; he is aware that time passes, but reminds her that the correct thing to do in these situations is to send a quick note ‘with the voluntary promise of a letter to follow. No letter came.’¹⁰⁰ With some

⁹⁴ Barbauld, III, 283-284. Wescomb describes her activities in detail: rowing; walking in the gardens and over the hills; fishing; breakfasting and dancing at Sunning-Hill; conversing; music; working; reading; and playing whist.

⁹⁵ Barbauld, III, 284.

⁹⁶ Barbauld, III, 284.

⁹⁷ Barbauld, III, 285.

⁹⁸ Barbauld, III, 285.

⁹⁹ Barbauld, III, 286. Richardson is referring to Wescomb’s departure to Ankerwyke: he reprimands her for declining to take the coach that he had hired for her. It seems that Richardson had agreed to travel with Wescomb but there was some confusion about the coach she was to travel in, which resulted in her not using it, and Richardson not accompanying her, because of the expense that he would have incurred. Richardson visited her once while she was at Ankerwyke, but was angered by her for not informing him of her intention to remain there longer, as he claims he would have visited her more.

¹⁰⁰ Barbauld, III, 287.

derision, Richardson labours his point, and perhaps with an element of teasing irony, reports the events of his past three weeks to her:

Week after week passed; nothing heard I of my girl. To be sure, at the beginning of the second week, thought I, she is gone back to Enfield. At the beginning of the third week, if she could not have called upon us, as she went by the turning that led to the deserted North-End (two bow-shoots, and no more) in her way to her best-loved mamma, she might have written to me, to let me know how and where she was. Still another week, and another passed – No daughter to be heard of! No Miss Wescomb! Lord forgive the child! Lord preserve my girl! thought I: what has become of her? – Ill, I doubt! Or sent for to Enfield, her mamma ill; and no heart to write – And then I pitied you all!

But behold! (Some comfort, though slighted!) on the 16th of October in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty, comes a letter dated the day before from Enfield, to acquaint me, “that the only reason that a certain person’s dear papa [...] Astonishing! – Since that happy event should have given her spirits to write, as it would have given me joy to hear the good news.”¹⁰¹

Richardson is vexed that Wescomb’s priorities have been elsewhere and that he is not her first consideration. He attempts to mask his feelings under the emotive references to Wescomb’s mother, whom Richardson always appears to prioritise. However, this seems to be out of politeness rather than any deep sense of care. Richardson’s idea is to teach Wescomb the consequences of her actions, and how these consequences impact upon everyone around her. He does not stop at this, continuing instead to dissect her letter, line by line, turning a lesson in responsibility into a diatribe concerned with himself. Richardson highlights some of Wescomb’s own reasons for failing to write, and then ventures further by demanding to know how she passes her time at specific points in the day, but then irrationally answers his own questions, thus exhibiting his resentment at her enjoyment.¹⁰² He casts himself in the role of a spurned lover rather than the adopted parent. Richardson is evidently resentful of any type of enjoyment that

¹⁰¹ Barbauld, III, 287-288.

¹⁰² Richardson refers to the beauties of Ankerwyke, with its ‘agreeable freedom, the chearful company and conversation (Poor North-End!) within’, as Wescomb’s excuse for not writing (Barbauld, III, 288).

does not include him, and as we see he transcribes long passages from Wescomb's letter and parenthetically adds sarcastic quips designed to teach her a lesson.¹⁰³ For example, when quoting the passage in which Wescomb describes her fishing excursions, where she 'seldom caught any thing', Richardson adds in '(No, Madam, nor deserved to catch any thing!---How could you expect luck, when so undutifully forgetful of your promise?)'; and when she declares that she has been 'working' and 'reading' whilst there, she is met with '(Did you say working?)' and '(Ay, reading!)'.¹⁰⁴ There is an air of puerility and desperation about Richardson's response, but he continues on his quest to mould Wescomb into his idea of the perfect woman by denigrating everything she writes. Richardson quizzes her over the use of her time when others were communicating with their loved ones. Wescomb's reprimand of Richardson for not visiting her more at Ankerwyke is anathema to him, and he launches into his final diatribe by somewhat petulantly informing Wescomb that:

When I consented so cheerfully, to my own regret, to part with you so much sooner than you had intended to leave us, I think, as you staid so much longer at Ankerwyke than you designed, you might, in your return, have paid us back a day or two of the three or four we lent you, and given me the opportunity to attend you at Enfield, which I had been deprived of to Ankerwyke. This would have been the least that we might have expected from a dutiful child. But the young lady that could not find time to write, in many weeks, one promised letter! Well!---I won't call you so much as a punctilious daughter. Yet I should not have said half so much, had I not been so strongly challenged for supposed defects, when my girl only was in fault.¹⁰⁵

For Richardson, the offence lies in the breakdown of tradition: a favour for a favour, and while he was willing to trade some of Wescomb's time at North End at the beginning of her excursion in order for her to enjoy some extra time early on at Ankerwyke, the unwritten convention means that Wescomb was supposed to reciprocate the trade at the end of her time with the Vanderplank's by visiting North End on her way home to Enfield. Evidently this did not happen and North

¹⁰³ Barbould, III, 289-290.

¹⁰⁴ Barbould, III, 289-290.

¹⁰⁵ Barbould, III, 291-292.

End was by-passed. Even though Richardson admits that he has written a ‘scolding letter’, and requests that they mutually forgive one another, he cannot resist the temptation to tell her that it is his role as ‘a father, as you own, to tell his children of their faults’.¹⁰⁶ Even though he claims to have ‘done scolding’, he reproachfully closes his letter to ‘My half, my almost-half, good girl’.¹⁰⁷

In his study *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy*, Richard M. Titmuss explains that:

In some societies, past and present, gifts to men aim to buy peace; to express affection, regard or loyalty; to unify a group; to bind the generations; to fulfil a contractual set of obligations and rights; to function as acts of penitence, shame or degradation, and to symbolize many other human sentiments. [...] Acts of giving are, in many societies, a group affair, woven into the fabric of being, and take place in personal face-to-face situations [...] But time may have to pass before a counter-gift can be made; thus, the notion of time in relation to acts of giving and receiving is significant and implies further notion of credit. More significant is the reality of the obligation or compulsion to give. In all that Mauss, Levi-Strauss, Homans, Schwartz and others have written on gift-exchange there emerges a vivid sense of the immense pervasiveness of the social obligation – the group compulsions – to give and to repay, and the strength of the supporting sanctions; dishonour, shame and guilt.¹⁰⁸

At this time, the exchange between Wescomb and Richardson are, on the one side, fuelled with anger, hurt and frustration, and on the other by naivety, flippancy and obduracy, and as the argument develops, each of these emotions turn into the feelings described above by Titmuss. Richardson is setting out elements of social structure that Wescomb should adhere to, and in return Wescomb, perhaps through lack of understanding of this convention is fighting against learning the lesson. Titmuss’s observations help us to understand Richardson’s frustration.

¹⁰⁶ Barbault, III, 293.

¹⁰⁷ Barbault, III, 293.

¹⁰⁸ Richard M. Titmuss, *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), p. 72. Titmuss’s study is largely concerned with ‘the role of altruism in modern society’, and while he mostly focuses on the donation of blood by strangers to strangers, he sets his study within a wider social context.

Wescomb's reply comes twenty-two days after Richardson's reproachful letter, and it is evident that she, like Richardson, with her erstwhile epistle, had taken time to reflect upon the contents of his. Dated 23 November 1750, Sarah Wescomb's three-and-a-half page letter is surprisingly forthright, as she stands by her previous one, claiming that it was a 'genuine account'.¹⁰⁹ Wescomb asserts that she was fully prepared for Richardson to be upset at her tardy writing, but 'flattered' herself that the detailed account she gave would make up for her prolonged silence.¹¹⁰ Wescomb exercises further silence, but whether this is as a result of feeling the guilt or shame previously described by Titmuss, or whether it is in order to 'work myself into ill-humour, to be equal to the task' of replying is impossible to determine, however, either way it takes her twenty-two days to reply, by which time she is unafraid to inform him that she is surprised by his reaction.¹¹¹ Wescomb tells Richardson that she 'endeavoured rather to think as little as possible of having received such a letter, or that it was necessary to write an answer to it', which then prompts her into an ardent defence:

But patience will hold out no longer: my vexation rises to my pen; and, for relief, must throw itself off this way. I have heard of dipping one's pen in gall: O that I had a little gall now, instead of harmless ink! Do, pray, Sir, send me some against next time; as you have, I believe, to spare.¹¹²

In contrast to Eaves and Kimpel's opinion of Sarah Wescomb, here she appears a feisty, principled young woman who is unafraid, when necessity prevails, to defend herself. She plays Richardson at his own game, and even though she is prepared to practice fortitude up to a point, she retaliates by raising the argument to another level. As far as Wescomb is concerned she rightly prioritised her visit to North End, and makes it clear that this was out of desire and not duty. She finds it reprehensible that Richardson should consider her a 'promise-breaker'.¹¹³ Wescomb's canny strategy is to mirror Richardson's structure, so, just as he posed questions to her she poses some to him in return.

¹⁰⁹ Barbauld, III, 294.

¹¹⁰ Barbauld, III, 294.

¹¹¹ Barbauld, III, 295.

¹¹² Barbauld, III, 295.

¹¹³ Barbauld, III, 296.

The letter draws to a close with Wescomb conveying to Richardson that any errors that she may have made were unintentional, and her hope is to ‘clear them up as far as I am able’.¹¹⁴ She signs off her letter with ‘Your still very affectionate, yet hardly-treated, S. Westcomb’, before adding a light-hearted postscript.¹¹⁵ Even though Wescomb acknowledges the teasing nuances in Richardson’s letter, she has also understood the underlying subtext involved and, as a consequence, has chosen to confront it, exorcising the ‘fretful and peevish’ behaviour noticed by her mother.¹¹⁶ In both this letter, and the previous one, Wescomb shows herself able to exonerate herself, and although Richardson has taken on the role of her adopted father - a role in which he esteems it his duty to educate her - Sarah Wescomb has the courage and articulacy to defend her character.

Richardson replies twelve days later on 5 December 1750, and rather than graciously accept Wescomb’s explanation and apology, he continues the argument.¹¹⁷ Richardson is unsatisfied with Wescomb’s attempt at an apology, reminding her that he once used to call her ‘my dove’, but that now she ‘give[s] anger for anger!’¹¹⁸ Curiously, Richardson appears to have confused Wescomb’s assertion with annoyance, and so his once passive and patronising tone, originally intended to exhibit superiority, becomes repetitive and suggests he is escalating the conflict. However, Richardson seems to recognise the cyclical nature of hurt when he alludes to Wescomb’s reaction to his own anger by observing ‘who knows what a lady is till she is provoked?’¹¹⁹ For Richardson, Wescomb remains a lady, but his question opens a debate as to what constitutes being one; he plants the seed for Wescomb to reflect upon.

Richardson’s fury comes from his idea that Wescomb is not taking responsibility for her behaviour and, once again, he tries to explain this through a series of questions designed to make her examine her conduct and eventually

¹¹⁴ Barbauld, III, 297.

¹¹⁵ Barbauld, III, 297. The spelling here of her surname is as it appears in Barbauld’s edition.

¹¹⁶ Barbauld, III, 298.

¹¹⁷ The disagreement had lasted for almost two months and the time that each party took to reply ranges from twelve days (Richardson) to twenty-two days (Wescomb). The original letter that offended Richardson was written on 5 October 1750. According to Eaves and Kimpel’s catalogue, Richardson had only written two letters to, but had received five letters from, other correspondents during this time which suggests that his distraction had been Miss Wescomb (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 653)

¹¹⁸ Barbauld, III, 298.

¹¹⁹ Barbauld, III, 299.

conform to his ideal. At first the questions are gentle, but direct, and form the beginning of a letter that dissects hers. This harrying facet of his character has not gone unnoticed by earlier critics and, as Carol Houlihan-Flynn remarks: ‘In his letters to young girls, coy matrons, and bluestockings, Richardson became a teasing tyrant, familiar and audacious, taking liberties with his correspondents and himself’.¹²⁰ But whether teasing or otherwise, Richardson’s objective is to highlight weakness, ensure submissiveness – even though, provided that it was always appropriate, he strongly encouraged the emancipation of female intellect – and most importantly for his argument to surpass all others. Richardson’s examination of Wescomb’s letter builds up into a crescendo of offence that he is unprepared to calm until she has apologised in accordance with his own predilection. At the heart of the argument, for Richardson at least, is the broken promise and he rests his entire argument on it, constantly referring back to it and asking Wescomb to account for it. The *OED* defines a promise as ‘A declaration or assurance made to another person with respect to the future, stating that one will do, or refrain from, some specified act, or that one will give or bestow some specified thing (usually in good sense, implying something to the advantage or pleasure of the person concerned’. Given Richardson’s ardent insistence upon rectitude, as well as his *penchant* for gift-giving, it is hardly surprising that his reaction to the breaking of what he would have considered to be a social contract, made by someone he adored, is as extreme as it is. Not only was the promise of a letter as good as the shake of a hand, but it was also a double gift. In his dictionary of 1755, Johnson describes the promise as ‘hopes; expectation’, and to promise is cited as ‘used of assurance’ or ‘to assure one by a promise’. He also includes the term ‘promisebreaker’ and describes this as ‘violator of promises’ and cites Shakespeare when trying to contextualise it: ‘He’s an hourly *promisebreaker*, the owner of no one good quality worthy of your entertainment.’ Richardson would have taken the broken promise as a sign of dishonour and disrespect. Richardson’s response is a letter of conditional love, passive anger and unrelenting offence, occasionally interspersed with sarcasm, bullying and aspects of theatrics.¹²¹

Wescomb’s reply comes fifty-one days after Richardson’s second attack, and from its contents we can glean that no other letter was lost or destroyed, and that it

¹²⁰ Houlihan-Flynn, p. xiii.

¹²¹ Richardson’s letter to Wescomb can be found in Barbauld, III, 298-305.

is a direct reply to his letter of 5 December 1750. Wescomb's tone is milder as she accuses Richardson of 'cruelty, nay revenge', and confesses that she thinks she may only have needed a little coaxing to 'run into the saucy vein', but is nevertheless surprised at herself for discovering this facet in her character.¹²² Sarah Wescomb is 'really frightened' by Richardson's letter and asks a few non-combative questions of him, as she wants to restore her status as his 'dove' as quickly as possible.¹²³ Wescomb reverts to blandishments in order to get Richardson back on her side:

I desire nothing more than a friend who would be impartial enough to make me see my errors: all that I beg is, that you'll bear with me not only with human, but with christian patience, since 'tis necessary here; and let me see, as I've shewn but little, that you greatly outdo me in this, as in every other excellence.¹²⁴

Unlike most of his other correspondents, Wescomb is less inclined toward flattery but here we see that she has an understanding of obsequiousness, and employs it when she deems it necessary. Wescomb takes the blame for their argument by identifying Richardson as the objective friend and she shows a willingness to forget his previous behaviour in order to maintain their relationship. Again Wescomb refers to misinterpretations, but assures Richardson of her high regard for him. Wescomb moves on to address the issue of the 'promise':

But now comes the formidable article of not writing after promise. Oh! what a terrible word! What shall I say? What can I say? Why nothing; but yet I think I could excuse it a little. Yet once more, self-justifier, be quiet – not another syllable: a promise broke is a promise broke, and nothing I can urge will make it less so. Well, if ever I go to Ankerwyke again, I will (Oh! bless me, here is another promise coming) sit up all night rather than not save my word; but even then I do not know how shall I keep it, for we never go to bed till late, and rise pretty early.¹²⁵

¹²² Barbauld, III, 306.

¹²³ Barbauld, III, 307.

¹²⁴ Barbauld, III, 307.

¹²⁵ Barbauld, III, 308.

Wescomb's approach here is to accept the blame, but to still make her point by stating it then refuting it herself. It is a strong tactic that reinforces her argument. Her strategy is to attempt to denigrate the word 'promise' in order to salvage some of her self-respect, but she then accepts her fate which, because she has already questioned the ethics of the word, goes some way to demeaning it.¹²⁶ Wescomb's promise to write to Richardson irrespective of sleep, not only flatters him into feeling satisfied that she would go to such lengths, but also shows the absurdity of his request. In an attempt to further explain herself, she draws Richardson's attention to his own anger at the prospect of her, or anyone, slighting him or misinterpreting 'favours, &c'.¹²⁷ Wescomb fakes surprise at this and answers 'Sir, am I not your daughter? do I not owe infinite favours to you?', the implications being that there is an inextricable, and perhaps cyclical, link between father, daughter and favour.¹²⁸ Richardson shows a need for paternal control, the highest form of domination and influence in his mind, which is coupled with a liking of being owed favours. Wescomb takes a step closer toward regret by informing Richardson that whilst he considers her to be 'very brave', if he were with her he would 'behold me wiping my eyes.'¹²⁹ The dialogue is jovial at this point with Wescomb allowing Richardson to laugh at her misery, but she accepts this because 'I love to have you merry, though at my expence, even tears and all.'¹³⁰ Wescomb suggests that perhaps the reason for her reaction to his letter is that she is unused to having to account for her behaviour, and wonders if there is 'no allowance made for one that has ever been mother-and-father-indulged, unchecked, and uncontrolled to this day?', but the intimation that Wescomb is some kind of feral child is frankly absurd.¹³¹ As the letter reaches its conclusion, Wescomb acknowledges that in her angry state she did not consider his 'displeasure' and instead concentrated on his 'treatment' of her.¹³² However, she would never renounce her 'own dear papa' and even though she knows that he thinks her heart is 'very tough', it would break if she really believed that he meant

¹²⁶ Barbault, III, 308.

¹²⁷ Barbault, III, 308.

¹²⁸ Barbault, III, 309.

¹²⁹ Barbault, III, 309.

¹³⁰ Barbault, III, 309.

¹³¹ Barbault, III, 309.

¹³² Barbault, III, 310.

it.¹³³ In Wescomb's final attempt to justify herself she stresses her politeness and naivety, giving Richardson the opportunity to assume the position of teacher once again, whilst at the same time manipulating his role as a pedant of manners. Wescomb assures Richardson that she has understood the importance of 'my duty, my honour, [and] my word', and further assures him that he will 'never be, intentionally, neglected or slighted' by her again.¹³⁴ This letter shows a complete turn around in Wescomb's attitude toward Richardson's judgement of her behaviour, and even though she maintains her argument, she extricates herself from Richardson's wrath. The full extent of her reasons for yielding will go unknown, but the courageous attempt that she made at defending herself, despite her 'lack of intellectual pretensions', will deem her worthy of a place alongside Richardson's more 'bookish' female companions.¹³⁵

The next letter chosen by Barbauld is undated, but its content tells us that Richardson was at Tunbridge, which locates it much earlier in August 1748.¹³⁶ The letter is nine pages long and seems as if nothing had happened between them which, if its true positioning is August 1748, there had not been.¹³⁷ Richardson is at Tunbridge to try the waters for his health and, as Wescomb had rightly predicted, he would 'rather be in a desert, than in a place so public and so giddy'.¹³⁸ Richardson is out of place there as he 'traverse[s] the utmost edges of the walks, that I may stand in nobody's way', and although he should not be working he is receiving regular letters about his 'town concerns' with 'every post and coach'.¹³⁹ Richardson describes the scene to Wescomb by saying that it is a 'very full season, and more coming every day – Great comfort to me!' before

¹³³ Barbauld, III, 310.

¹³⁴ Barbauld, III, 310.

¹³⁵ Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 198-199.

¹³⁶ Bizarrely, Barbauld inserts the letter between a letter from Wescomb to Richardson dated 25 January 1750-1 and another letter dated 15 June 1754, again from Wescomb to Richardson. Eaves and Kimpel tell us that around September 1752 'B[arbauld]'s letters at this period seem confused' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 663). Barbauld may have confused the positioning of other letters, or deliberately placed it here, perhaps to lighten the tension of the previous exchanges between Wescomb and Richardson. Thirty-nine letters passed between them from 25 January 1750-1 and 15 June 1754, including one from Richardson to Wescomb dated 1 February 1751.

¹³⁷ It is important to remember that Barbauld is constructing an idea of Richardson for her new readers and the possibility of Richardson holding a grudge against anyone, particularly a young lady, does not fit with her creation. There are references to *Clarissa* toward the end of the letter, as well as discussions of Colley Cibber's behaviour at Tunbridge, and also one of his works, all of which contribute to the confused dating of the letter (see later comments).

¹³⁸ Barbauld, III, 311.

¹³⁹ Barbauld, III, 312.

moving on to a commentary about wives, cuckolded husbands and contemporary fashion:

And methinks I would wish that the wives (particularly some that I see here) would not behave as if they thought themselves unmarried coquettes, and that it were polite to make their husbands the last persons in their notices. It is not enough for these people to find themselves dressed and adorned at an expense, both as to quality and quantity, that would furnish out two wives or mistresses: but they must show that those dresses and ornaments are bestowed upon them to please and delight any body rather than the person whom it should be their principal study to please; and who, perhaps, confers, or contributes to confer, upon them the means by which they shine, and think themselves above him? Secret history and scandal I love not – or I could tell you – you don't think what I could tell you.¹⁴⁰

Richardson's supposed lack of enjoyment at Tunbridge is largely due to the similarities it exhibits to the pleasure gardens of Vauxhall and Ranelagh, and his purported loathing for fashion and everything that it represents is candidly revealed in this passage. He despises inappropriate behaviour, and women who show disrespect for their husbands are his target here. This passage is as much a lesson in spousal etiquette for Wescomb, as it is an opportunity for Richardson to expound his dogmatic opinions. Richardson leaves the subject of wives and fashion, but continues to discuss the women that he encounters there, saying that 'a pretty woman is as rare as a black swan', but that 'when one such starts up, she is nicknamed a Beauty, and old fellows and young fellows are set a-spinning after her.'¹⁴¹ His observation is that the crowds there crave pretty faces, and after focussing on them for a while they disregard them and move on to the next one. Richardson begins to tell Wescomb about one young girl who 'was the belle when I first came down', but due to her having had 'so many seasons here', she was added to 'their list of had-beens!'¹⁴² Richardson goes on to tell Wescomb that at

¹⁴⁰ Barbauld, III, 312-313.

¹⁴¹ Barbauld, III, 313.

¹⁴² The young lady in question was Miss Peggy Banks who, in letters dated 2 August and 5 August 1746, was mentioned by Horace Walpole to George Montagu. In the first letter Walpole informs his friend that 'His Highness was to have given Peggy Banks a ball last night; but was persuaded to defer it', and in the second letter Walpole tells Montagu that 'The Duke gave his ball to Peggy

Tunbridge ‘New faces, my dear, are more sought after than fine faces’, and explains that there is something to be learned from this experience, as ‘women should not make even their faces cheap.’¹⁴³ For the next three and a half pages Richardson reports to Wescomb the succession of young ladies that had attracted the attentions of the rapacious public, the first being Elizabeth Chudleigh.¹⁴⁴ Richardson tells of the virtues of Miss Chudleigh and, as with the hype surrounding the aforementioned Gunning sisters, he reports that ‘She moved not without crowds after her’, but she soon ‘went off’ and ‘then the fellows’ hearts were almost broke for a new beauty.’¹⁴⁵ However, the day that Miss Chudleigh departed a new face had arrived from Hackney: Miss L.¹⁴⁶ Unfortunately for Miss L she was discovered ‘to want spirit and life’ and was relegated to walking ‘with a very silly fellow or two’, whereupon the star of Miss Chudleigh rose again.¹⁴⁷ Richardson’s point is that the public are fickle and by virtue of this, so is the status of ‘pretty girls here’.¹⁴⁸ He is disappointed that the female sex has developed a stronger interest in the physical exterior, perhaps made apparent by a particular type of male attitude, thanks to the public interest in beauty and celebrity, and has deduced that men now prefer this.¹⁴⁹ Richardson is not surprised by this because it means that men have less to do if they want the company of a particular woman, but he attests that ‘these public places’ are not the best circumstances for young women to find a husband.¹⁵⁰ Richardson begins to tell Wescomb the story of the man that ‘Mr. Cibber calls papa’, despite the fact

Banks at Vauxhall’ (Horace Walpole, *The Private Correspondence of Horace Walpole with George Montagu Esq.*, 3 vols (London: Henry Colburn Publisher, 1837), p. 96 and p. 99). These letters help us to date the undated letter found in Barbauld. Austin Dobson refers to Peggy Banks as a ‘Professional beauty’ (*Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, 2nd series (London: Chatto and Windus, 1894), p. 66). Presumably the same label could be applied to Elizabeth Chudleigh, as well as Maria and Elizabeth Gunning.

¹⁴³ Barbauld, III, 314.

¹⁴⁴ Elizabeth Chudleigh (1720-1788) was a well-known and popular beauty who spent time at court as the Maid of Honour to Augusta, the Princess of Wales. Chudleigh’s life is largely defined by her scandalous betrothals and marriages, as well as by reports of scenes of drunken revelry and indelicate behaviour. After the death of her second husband (Evelyn Pierrepont, second Duke of Kingston) – and after various court battles over his will – she retired to Paris where she died a widow in 1788 (*ODNB*).

¹⁴⁵ Barbauld, III, 314.

¹⁴⁶ Barbauld, III, 314.

¹⁴⁷ Barbauld, III, 315.

¹⁴⁸ Barbauld, III, 315.

¹⁴⁹ Barbauld, III, 315-316.

¹⁵⁰ Barbauld, III, 316.

that this man is eighty years old and Colley Cibber is seventy-seven.¹⁵¹ What is surprising about the story that Richardson imparts is that it ridicules another of his correspondents, Colley Cibber. The story highlights the ridiculousness of the situation at Tunbridge, and Richardson revels in teaching Wescomb about it.¹⁵² As the story progresses we learn that Cibber has ‘written a dialogue between father and daughter – the intention, to show that paternal authority and filial obedience may be reconciled!’¹⁵³ The story, *The Lady’s Lecture*, is still in existence, and whilst it addresses the issue of filial obedience, it tends to offer an alternative argument to the one Richardson presents in *Clarissa*.¹⁵⁴ Richardson exhibits disdain at Cibber’s offering, and as the letter progresses he tells Wescomb that Cibber had read part of it to him and the Speaker, and that Richardson, upon the Speaker’s advice, had provided a few critical comments.¹⁵⁵ The letter comes to a close with Richardson reprimanding Wescomb for his writing of a ‘trifling letter’ but tells her that if she ‘could bear such stuff, I could run on a volume.’¹⁵⁶ Richardson enjoys the gossip and the opportunity for judgement that comes with attending Tunbridge, and even though ostensibly he may consider it his duty to

¹⁵¹ Barbauld, III, 316. According to Richardson, ‘Mr. Cibber was over head and ears in love with Miss Chudleigh.’ In his biography of Cibber, Eric Salmon informs us that Cibber, like Richardson, a lowly man by birth, had made it his ambition ‘to attain the rank of gentleman and to that end made it a point to consort with gentlemen, or those who passed for gentlemen’ (Eric Salmon, ‘Colley Cibber’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://oxforddnb.com>> [accessed 14 Sept 2009]).

¹⁵² Even though Richardson is critical of both Cibber’s behaviour at Tunbridge and, more generally, the entire ambience of the place, he is quick to make clear that he was only ever there on the grounds of his health. Nevertheless, he was present at Tunbridge at peak season. There is a print from 1748 cited in a footnote from Basil Williams (*The Whig Supremacy, 1714-1760*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 145), that clearly shows Richardson, along with Garrick, Johnson, Cibber, Elizabeth Chudleigh and others, perusing the gardens at Tunbridge. This print appears at the beginning of volume III of Barbauld’s edition of Richardson’s *Correspondence*. Williams remarks that ‘At the fashionable watering-places, such as Bath and Tunbridge Wells, the local gentry had the opportunity of meeting all the great and lovely of the land’, Richardson being one of them (Williams, p. 145).

¹⁵³ Barbauld, III, 317. In the letter Richardson is equivocal about Cibber’s work. The piece which offers advice on the choosing of a husband as well as paternal moderation, and was adoringly dedicated to Elizabeth Chudleigh (Helene Koon, *Colley Cibber: A Biography* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), p. 172) was poorly ‘received by Richardson and his circle’ (Leonard R. N. Ashley, *Colley Cibber* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), p. 129) because they believed that it incited filial disobedience.

¹⁵⁴ Colley Cibber, *The Lady’s Lecture, A Theatrical Dialogue, between Sir Charles Easy and his Marriageable Daughter. Being an Attempt to engage Obedience by FILIAL LIBERTY: And to give the Maiden Conduct of Virtue, Cheerfulness* (London: W. Lewis, 1748). For Richardson, ‘the piece is calculated [...] to throw down all distinction between parents and children’, and because it is being well received by ‘the young flirts’, he is uncertain whether or not it will be published. He states that if it is published he ‘had a good mind that Miss Howe (who is pert enough of conscience to her mamma; Clarissa you know is dead) should answer it.’ (Barbauld, III, 318).

¹⁵⁵ Cibber had read drafts of *Clarissa* in 1745 given to him by Richardson.

¹⁵⁶ Barbauld, III, 319.

imply that such places are abhorrent to him, he also realises that he enjoys 'relating others' follies and forgetting my own.'¹⁵⁷

The next letter, dated 15 June 1754 is from Wescomb to Richardson, and joyously announces that the sooner Richardson and his family can visit them at Enfield the better. The letter suggests that the Wescomb-Richardson correspondence had broken down for a while, but that Richardson had agreed to start it up again, and Wescomb is both relieved and grateful because she 'could not reconcile [herself] to your travelling through the journey of life, without your now and then pointing me out by finger the right path to take'.¹⁵⁸ Even though their communication had been fairly regular between February 1754 and June 1754, the same apologies that Thomas Edwards – he too had been writing regularly – makes in his communication with Richardson at this time, occur in the Wescomb-Richardson letters. Both sets of unnecessary apologies occur around the time of the publication of *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-1754), and it begs the question whether this reveals an awareness by Richardson's friends of his increasing fame and status and their concerns about losing contact with an eminent writer.¹⁵⁹

Dated 22 October 1754, the next letter, written by Richardson to Wescomb, is barely a page and a half long, and Barbauld uses it to inform her reader that Wescomb's mother has died and that Richardson is there wholly to advise and to offer support. He tries to let her know that she is not alone in her grief, and that it will pass with time. Richardson assures Wescomb that she is loved by all who meet her.¹⁶⁰

The three final letters that Barbauld has selected are written from Kentchurch in Herefordshire, and Sarah Scudamore has been married for exactly a year – Sarah Wescomb married John Scudamore on 26 August 1756 – in the first one,

¹⁵⁷ Barbauld, III, 319.

¹⁵⁸ Barbauld, III, 320. Eaves and Kimpel tells us that Richardson had sent a letter to Wescomb on 12 June 1754, and Wescomb had sent one to him on the 6 June 1754, but before that their last communication had been on 28 March 1754. Their communication was fairly frequent (monthly) throughout February and March of 1754.

¹⁵⁹ Wescomb signs off her letter by deferentially assuaging Richardson that his nerves 'have been thoroughly tried, by study, application, and a tender feeling heart!' (Barbauld, III, 321).

¹⁶⁰ Just as Richardson had adopted Sarah Wescomb as his daughter, he also adopted her mother as his sister. He had wanted Wescomb to live with him after the death of her mother, but she refused, promising to ask his advice on every major decision. He in turn promised to visit her regularly at Enfield, but only seems to have gone there once briefly. His daughter Mary visited and stayed with Wescomb for a longer period (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 441).

she states that she is celebrating her first wedding anniversary.¹⁶¹ Scudamore comments in the letter that she has only been at Kentchurch for one week, leading us to assume that the newly married couple had either resided elsewhere or had been away. However, Scudamore has had a child in this time which, along with the twenty-three members of her new family, has taken up much of her time.¹⁶² Scudamore offers Richardson a description of Kentchurch, claiming that some of it dates back to ‘before William the Conqueror’, and she informs him that her husband had redecorated some of the rooms and that the rest will be updated ‘at a small expense.’¹⁶³ She has found Kentchurch surprisingly different from its description and is impressed with her new home and her husband.¹⁶⁴ Scudamore reports that she has been confined indoors, and that due to bad weather the only trip that she has been able to make was with her ‘trusty knight’ who wanted to show her some of the beautiful areas around their home.¹⁶⁵ She concludes that she ‘scarce ever saw a finer landscape.’¹⁶⁶ We learn that Kentchurch is largely self-sufficient and affords them not only beautiful visits but ‘plenty of provisions for all.’¹⁶⁷ Scudamore closes her letter by telling Richardson that their journey was pleasant and safe, and that their ‘little boy bore the fatigue as well as any of us.’¹⁶⁸

Richardson’s reply is written on 12 September 1757, and stretches to just two pages. He has enjoyed reading the descriptions of Kentchurch and congratulates Scudamore on her drawing of them. Richardson’s letter is jolly, and he imparts the news that ‘Polly, last Tuesday, September the sixth, was married to a Mr. Ditcher, a surgeon of Bath.’¹⁶⁹ Richardson claims that his wife had given her

¹⁶¹ Twenty-nine extant letters pass between Richardson and Sarah Scudamore during this time (plus two between Richardson and her husband John Scudamore).

¹⁶² Barbauld, III, 324.

¹⁶³ Barbauld, III, 325.

¹⁶⁴ John Scudamore had lived alone at Kentchurch for some time but he had managed to provide it with ‘many conveniences in kitchen, parlour, and hall’ (Barbauld, III, 325).

¹⁶⁵ Barbauld, III, 326.

¹⁶⁶ Barbauld, III, 325-326.

¹⁶⁷ Barbauld, III, 326-327. Scudamore tells Richardson that they have ducks, fowl, grain, and orchards at Kentchurch.

¹⁶⁸ Barbauld, III, 327.

¹⁶⁹ Barbauld, III, 328. The marriage between Richardson’s eldest daughter Mary (Polly) and Philip Ditcher was fraught with problems before it began. Richardson had not been present at the first meeting between the pair, and a proposal had been made and accepted without his knowledge or consent. Richardson and Ditcher had failed to agree on dowry terms for the marriage – Ditcher had asked for £3,000 in dowry, and Richardson felt that this was an inappropriate request – but this was eventually resolved. Richardson was largely unimpressed with the way that Ditcher had conducted himself throughout these negotiations, particularly when Ditcher asserted that any

consent for Polly to move away, and now that the departure was imminent, she was regretting it – (he notes that he would never have allowed it in the first place!). Richardson complains that his nerves have worsened as a result of weeks of trepidation at the prospect of giving his daughter away at her wedding, and he discloses to Scudamore that the same had happened to him when he performed ‘the same solemn office’ at her wedding ‘a year ago’.¹⁷⁰ Richardson tells Scudamore that due to this nervous tension he has had to employ someone else to write this letter for him as he is incapable of holding his pen.¹⁷¹

The final letter in Barbauld’s third volume is from Scudamore to Richardson and is dated 12 March 1758.¹⁷² Scudamore opens her letter by telling Richardson that she was ‘greatly affected by [his] last letter’ and that even though she had shed tears, they were the sort of tears that she was happy to shed because his letter had been full of his ‘great tenderness and affection for me’.¹⁷³ However, the most touching aspect was that Richardson had written the letter himself despite the pain of writing.¹⁷⁴ John Scudamore had seen how distressed his wife was and when she showed him the letter and they both praised and extolled the goodness of Richardson. Scudamore tells Richardson that she has ‘lately read over my oracle (Pamela)’, and she is using it to educate her son.¹⁷⁵ At this point Scudamore begins to describe her son’s character, and promises to teach him ‘to respect and love your character; and hope, before a great while elapses, to bring him to know you in person; and to ask your blessing.’¹⁷⁶ An invitation for Richardson to attend Kentchurch draws both her letter and the volume to a close. Her final words inform Richardson that despite spending much of her time at home, she is never

further purchases he made to the estate would not be made part of their deal (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 477).

¹⁷⁰ Barbauld, III, 329.

¹⁷¹ Barbauld, III, 329.

¹⁷² There are six more extant letters between Scudamore and Richardson after this time, as well as one from Scudamore to Patty Richardson and one exchange of letters between Richardson and Ann Scudamore, Sarah’s sister-in-law.

¹⁷³ Barbauld, III, 330.

¹⁷⁴ There had been five exchanges between Richardson and Scudamore (four of which were from Scudamore) since the previous letter included by Barbauld (see Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 693-95). This suggests that the letter Scudamore is referring to is the one dated 10 February 1758 (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 695/FM XIV, 2). The Forster manuscripts confirm that Richardson wrote it himself (the handwriting shows the older, much larger Richardson script, as opposed to the small, tight handwriting he had some years earlier).

¹⁷⁵ Barbauld, III, 331. Sarah Scudamore was not the only correspondent of Richardson’s to use one of his novels as a conduct manual, for example Lady Bradshaigh (as herself and as Belfour) often refers to *Clarissa*.

¹⁷⁶ Barbauld, III, 331.

alone, as she is either surrounded by her family or ‘A great many of the nobility and gentry of the country, are very agreeable, and do me the honour and pleasure in entering into a friendship with me’.¹⁷⁷

Sarah Wescomb-Scudamore, as adopted daughter to Richardson, is most definitely a success story in his eyes. Richardson had encouraged her to be independent and confident, but was alarmed at her supposed lack of consideration and obedience back in October 1750. However, this alarm was relatively short-lived when Wescomb complied with and accepted the conventions set out by Richardson. Whether or not Wescomb ever truly believed them, or whether she simply crumbled under his relentless inability to concede, will never be known. It is my view that she graciously surrendered to a man incapable, despite his years, of doing the same. For Richardson, Scudamore’s marriage to John Scudamore, along with the estate and the birth of a son, assures him of his success as an adopted father.

The relationship between Richardson and Wescomb is, in the first instance, one of intimacy and familial care, but on closer inspection a picture of flirtatious, eroticised, squabbling emerges. In Richardson’s novels – particularly *Clarissa* – defined emotions are written in great detail, and this effective method is being employed by Richardson and Wescomb in their letters.

¹⁷⁷ Barbauld, III, 331-332.

CHAPTER FOUR

Belfour (Lady Dorothy Bradshaigh)

The relationship between Dorothy Bradshaigh (Belfour) and Samuel Richardson began somewhat unconventionally in October 1748 and lasted for the rest of his life.¹ The entire collection of Bradshaigh letters were left to Anne Richardson (at this time, Richardson's only surviving daughter) by Edward Bridgen, Martha's husband. In turn, Anne left them to her nephews Samuel Crowther and Philip Ditcher (Junior) who eventually sold them on to Richard Phillips.² In Barbauld's edition of Richardson's *Correspondence*, her selection of the Richardson-Bradshaigh letters is extensive, and whilst it would have been preferable to have presented them in their entirety, for the purposes of this thesis their sheer quantity – running to a volume and a half – has prevented a more comprehensive discussion. My rationale for focussing on the Belfour correspondence (Lady Bradshaigh's chosen pseudonym at the start of their communication) is because by 1750, when Belfour was unmasked, her status would change from being Richardson's ardent, yet anonymous fan, to his life-long friend.³ Subsequently, I have elected to include the Richardson-Belfour

¹ The last extant letter is dated 13 March 1761 – three months and twenty-one days before he died – and Eaves and Kimpel suggest that although it was sent to the Richardson household it was probably to Martha, Richardson's first daughter by his first wife. The last letter included by Barbauld in her edition is dated 25 June 1757 (*The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison. Selected from the Original Manuscripts, Bequeathed by him to his Family, To which are prefixed, A Biographical Account of that Author, and Observations on his Writings*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1804)).

² T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 438.

³ Refer to Barbauld, IV, 177-379 for all Belfour letters (IV, 177-356) and the beginning of the Bradshaigh letters (IV, 357-379); and Barbauld, VI in its entirety for the remainder of the Bradshaigh letters. At the end VI Barbauld includes an extensive index (VI, 289-313); a list of referred to authors (VI, 314-315); a list of the plates found throughout the volumes (VI, 316-317); and a number of facsimile copies of the manuscript letters from various correspondents (Richardson to Dr. John Duncombe; Mr. James Harris to Richardson; Dr. William Warburton to Richardson; Mr. Colley Cibber to Richardson; Mr. David Garrick to Richardson; Mr. James Hervey to Richardson; and Dr. Edward Young to Richardson. Barbauld's employer, Richard Phillips, includes eight pages (VI, 319-326) of advertisements for 'New and Valuable Books Lately Published' by him. The original manuscripts found in the Forster Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, show the Richardson-Bradshaigh letters to be extensive and complex. In his *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), John Carroll dedicates one hundred and seven pages - approximately a third - of his three hundred and three page chapter on Richardson's correspondents - of which he includes thirty-three of them - to Lady Bradshaigh. In fact, Lady Bradshaigh's correspondence with Richardson weaves through the works of most other important Richardson scholars (for example, William Merritt Sale Jnr, Mark Kinkead-

relationship as it exhibits the strongest elements of fanaticism that I believe Bradshaigh to have shown throughout their correspondence, and in it we are able to see how Belfour's strategic approach to Richardson's world resulted in her lengthy stalling – she kept Richardson, his family and some of his other fans, in suspense about her identity for a year and four months (October 1748 - February 1750) – when called upon to reveal herself, and her eventual involuntary unmasking at an informal meeting with a famous painter.⁴

At the beginning of the Belfour letters Anna Barbauld provides her reader with an introduction to the Richardson-Belfour relationship:

The correspondence with Lady Bradshaigh began in the following manner:-A lady, calling herself Belfour, wrote to the author of *Clarissa*, after reading the first four volumes, acquainting him that a report prevailed, that *The History of Clarissa* was to end in a most tragical manner, and, expressing her abhorrence of such a catastrophe, begged to be satisfied of the truth by a few lines inserted in the *Whitehall Evening Post*. – Mr. Richardson complied with her request; in consequence of which many letters passed between them, the lady's under her assumed name. Lady Bradshaigh lived in Haigh, in Lincolnshire; but the address she gave was, "To be left at the Post-office in Exeter till called for," and her own letters were dated Exeter.⁵

Weekes, Alan Dugald McKillop, Peter Sabor, Tom Keymer, Carol Houlihan-Flynn, and Margaret Anne Doody among others).

⁴ In his essay 'Richardson, Incognita, and the *Whitehall Evening-Post*: New Light on Richardson's Correspondence with Lady Bradshaigh and the text of his first letter' (*Oxford Journal Notes and Queries*, vol. 39, (1992), 477-480), Tom Keymer suggests that Belfour's correspondence with Richardson began sometime before the 10 October 1748 entry found in Barbauld's edition (Eaves and Kimpel also cite this letter as the first extant correspondence between them), but neither he nor I can provide any further evidence, other than the contents of this first letter presented by Barbauld, to suggest that communication had already begun. The serial publication of *Clarissa* began on the 1 December 1747, with volumes I and II being released to the public. Four months later, in late April 1748, volumes III and IV appeared, and volumes V, VI and VII (the final volume) were available to the public on the 6 December 1748. At first Belfour refused to read volumes V-VII having heard about the supposed destiny of her ill-fated heroine, *Clarissa*, but as we will see she was soon persuaded otherwise.

⁵ Barbauld, IV, 177.

This short synopsis of events serves its purpose as an introduction to the curious beginnings of the Richardson-Bradshaigh affiliation, and as the following letters will show, this is exactly what happened.⁶

The original manuscripts show Belfour's script to be generally neat, but sloping gently to the right. There are approximately thirty-three lines on any single sheet of manuscript paper (42cm(h) x 30cm(w)), with her script standing approximately 0.5cm tall, and the amount of ink being used is thin and adequate, apart from when Belfour signs her name when it would appear as though Bradshaigh is drawing the reader's eye more directly toward her alter ego by using a slightly thicker ink. The Belfour letters are devoid of blots of ink, unlike the later Bradshaigh letters which are riddled with thick black deletes, corrections and marginalia. However, she has a tendency to underline a lot, and of course there are the conspicuous slash lines through paragraphs left behind by Anna Barbauld.⁷ Dorothy Bradshaigh takes more care when writing as Belfour, as if she wants to make a good impression on her new correspondent, but by the time they have developed into life-long friends the appearance of the letters becomes far more cavalier.⁸

The letters are presented chronologically by date in Barbauld's edition, so far as she could decipher at least, and I will adhere to this rule whilst discussing them, including any additional later information offered by Eaves and Kimpel. However, when the content of the letters becomes repetitive or insignificant, I will bracket some of them together in order to discuss them more concisely. The first three letters selected by Barbauld require close reading in order for us to establish the foundations and nature of their unusual relationship, and then, as with the other correspondents I have chosen, I will offer a general appraisal of their epistolary relationship.

⁶ Barbauld does make one error here by suggesting that the location of Haigh was Lincolnshire when in fact it was in Lancashire (Tom Keymer also refers to Barbauld's geographical error (Keymer, p. 478)).

⁷ Whilst working on her edition Anna Barbauld used thick black lines of ink on the original manuscripts when selecting which paragraphs to cut. These do not in any way make the manuscripts impossible to read, but the occasional letter or word is, at times, difficult to decipher. In the article mentioned above Keymer refers to the 'notoriously corrupt text pieced together by Mrs. Barbauld' and asserts that the Belfour-Bradshaigh letters are 'fragmented and incomplete' (Keymer, pp. 477-478), sadly this is true.

⁸ As the relationship between Lady Bradshaigh and Richardson developed there are regular occasions in the manuscripts where specific words or phrases have been blacked out entirely, and this was done largely by Richardson, upon Bradshaigh's request, at the time when he was working on them with thoughts of possible publication in the late 1750's (see Eaves and Kimpel, p. 437).

There are twenty-two Richardson-Belfour letters included in Barbauld's edition, thirteen of which are from Belfour to Richardson, with nine being from Richardson to Belfour. Compared to the other correspondents, these letters are generally long, lasting between half a page and twenty-two pages.⁹ Most of the letters run to approximately eleven pages, and there is frequent mention, usually by Belfour, of the length of them.

The date of Barbauld's first selected letter from Belfour coincides with the first existing letter referred to by Eaves and Kimpel. Dated 10 October 1748 it is four and a half pages long and its contents are only concerned with *Clarissa*.¹⁰ Belfour has been 'pressed, Sir, by a multitude of your admirers, to plead in behalf of your amiable Clarissa', because they have been led to believe that 'a fatal catastrophe' is planned for their heroine, and she is compelled to 'apprehend' it.¹¹ Belfour asserts that she has heard that certain advisors of Richardson's are encouraging him to write of 'rapes, ruin, and destruction', and that he is choosing to ignore 'others, who feel for the virtuous in distress'; she aims to make a case for the latter and constructs her defence by highlighting the softer side of Richardson's writing.

Belfour's approach is, at first, to flatter and then to condemn, and she begins by claiming that she finds it hard to believe that 'he who has the art to please in softness, in the most natural, easy, humorous, and sensible manner, can resolve to give joy only to the ill-natured reader'.¹² She tells Richardson that he is able to evoke emotion in a reader better than any other author that she has read, that he touches 'where nature ought to be touched, you make the very soul feel.'¹³

⁹ A note from Richardson dated 'Feb. 8, 1749-50' (Barbauld, IV, 348) runs to half a page, and a letter from Belfour which is undated in Barbauld but is placed between a letter dated 'October 29th, 1749' (Barbauld, IV, 257) and another undated letter from Richardson which is followed by a letter dated 'Dec. 16th, 1749' (Barbauld, IV, 294) runs to twenty-two pages. Eaves and Kimpel attempt to date the undated letters for us, claiming that the first undated letter – found in Barbauld, IV, 262-283 – was written in '[Early Nov.?)' and that it is 'N.d., answered in part by R's [late Nov.?)', but both may be compounded of more than one letter, written any time during Jan-Nov. 1749' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 648). They declare the same about the second undated letter mentioned above, stating that it is possibly dated '[Late Nov.?)' and that it 'Answers parts of both her 29 Oct. and her [early Nov.?) letters; is answered by her 16 Dec; may be compounded of more than one letter' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 648). It is therefore impossible to accurately date these letters.

¹⁰ Tom Keymer states that this first letter selected by Barbauld could not have been their first communication and that 'at least seven and probably eight letters were exchanged [...] before November 1748' (Keymer, p. 478).

¹¹ Barbauld, IV, 177-178.

¹² Barbauld, IV, 178.

¹³ Barbauld, IV, 179.

Belfour tells Richardson that he is mistaken if he thinks his reader will be moved by ‘murder, or any other horrid act’, and that if he is the author that ‘I take you to be’ then he will dispense of these plans and revert to one that would ‘please’ his readers.¹⁴ Her early defence attempts to appeal to his better nature; she tries to seduce him with flattery, tinged with a modicum of passive threat which implies that if he proceeds with this storyline then he is not what she, or many of his other fans, thought he was. Belfour is prepared to allow Richardson to take ‘the divine Clarissa to the very brink of destruction’ but then requests ‘(may I say, insist upon) a turn, that will make your almost despairing readers half mad with joy.’¹⁵ Belfour anticipates Richardson’s response by stating that if he were to write ‘a little excuse to the reader’ explaining his change of heart, stating that he had taken the ‘advice of friends’, and ‘upon mature deliberation’ had decided to alter his plan so as not to disappoint his readers, then all would be well.¹⁶ She endeavours to apologise for her audacious attempt at ‘offering to put words in the mouth of the ingenious Mr. Richardson’, by informing him that she ‘blush[es] of the deepest dye’, before moving on to her fondness for Lovelace, which again makes her blush.¹⁷ She is evidently perplexed by her feelings for Lovelace, because she asks Richardson why he has made him ‘so wicked, and yet so agreeable’, and Belfour explains to Richardson that he has the ability to write Lovelace as a reformed rake rather than a foolish one, and that she hopes he will.¹⁸ It is at this point in the opening letter that Belfour abruptly changes her tack, and the tone of the letter becomes overtly threatening:

If you disappoint me, attend my curse: - May the hatred of all the young, beautiful, and virtuous, for ever be your portion! and may your eyes never behold any thing but age and deformity! may you meet with applause only from envious old maids, surly bachelors, and tyrannical parents! may you be doomed to the company of such! and, after death, may their ugly souls haunt you!

Now make Lovelace and Clarissa unhappy if you dare.

Perhaps you may think all this proceeds from a giddy girl of sixteen; but know that I am past my romantic time of life, though young enough to wish two lovers happy in

¹⁴ Barbauld, IV, 179.

¹⁵ Barbauld, IV, 179.

¹⁶ Barbauld, IV, 180.

¹⁷ Barbauld, IV, 180.

¹⁸ Barbauld, IV, 181.

a married state. As I myself am in that class, it makes me still more anxious for the lovely pair. I have common understanding, and middling judgement, for one of my sex, which I tell you for fear you should not find it out; but if you take me for a fool, I do not care a straw. What I have said is without the least vanity, not but modesty would have forbid; but that you only know me by the name of

BELFOUR.¹⁹

For Belfour the time for flattery and praise is over, and she is now ready to show Richardson the true extent of her emotions about his proposed ending. The switch from passive-aggressive politeness to ominous obsessive is palpable, and the reader is able to experience the full extent of passion that Richardson's novel has stirred. Suffice to say that despite this acute over-reaction, the threat could never have been taken too seriously because, even though Richardson was evidently intent on accruing a plethora of fans and encouraged all and sundry to correspond with him, had he felt truly threatened then the communication would have been immediately terminated. In issuing her warning, Belfour focuses on the attributes most desirable to Richardson: youth, beauty and virtuosity, and considering that this is almost certainly his target audience then she adroitly preys upon his Achilles' heel. When earlier in the letter she claims that she 'pretends to know your heart so well', one might argue that she is not far from the truth.²⁰ In her youth Dorothy Bradshaigh was a 'wild' and 'a strange unthinking girl' whose 'wildness seems to have been confined to comical pranks', and as their correspondence developed Richardson was inclined to tease out that playful side in her.²¹ In this first Belfour letter the 'comical Miss Do' is approaching Richardson with a *melange* of concerns: an impassioned argument with a sting in its tail that was just enough to captivate Richardson and confirm to him the true extent of the popularity of his novel.²² Belfour's point is clear, she wants a happy ending and this must come irrespective of any loss of face for its author, or consideration for any other type of audience member who may be enjoying the

¹⁹ Barbauld, IV, 181-182.

²⁰ Barbauld, IV, 179.

²¹ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 233.

²² Lady Bradshaigh's younger sister, Lady Elizabeth Echlin (1702-1782), was also a correspondent of Richardson's (from late 1753) and this is the childhood nick-name she gave to Dorothy Bradshaigh (then Bellingham).

anticipation of the proposed tragic ending. This letter could only ever have delighted Richardson, and as Eaves and Kimpel point out he ‘was not a little pleased with his correspondence with Belfour and lent it to several of his friends, including Hill’s three daughters, Miss Talbot, Miss Grainger, Mrs. Dewes, and Mrs. Delany.’²³ His eagerness to engage in a communication with her is further proof of his delight, so he heeds to her initial request by placing an advert in the *Whitehall Evening-Post*.²⁴ Richardson had begun advertising *Clarissa* in the *Whitehall Evening-Post* in several issues starting in late April and early May, and Thomas Keymer asserts that he continued to use it as a means of communicating with ‘his unknown correspondent’.²⁵ The communication can be found in the July 30, 1748 edition of the *Whitehall Evening-Post*:

*If the ingenious Lady, who wrote to a certain Bookseller in London, about the 10th of this present Month of July, and another Letter a few Days ago, both without Name or Date; but the Post-mark of the first Letter WARRINGTON; will be pleased to signify to the Person to whom she orders those Letters to be given, how she may be addressed to by Letter; and will have the Goodness to construe as favourably as deserved, and not to the Person[']s Apprehension of his Suffering in his Interest for pursuing, with the best Intention, the Dictates of his own Judgement; all possible Satisfaction shall be endeavoured to be given her in Relation to the Subject she writes upon.*²⁶

For Keymer there is no doubt that this is the advert that Barbauld refers to, and that Richardson is its writer, and Belfour its intended audience.²⁷ However, this is not the most interesting aspect of this notice for Keymer:

It also becomes clear that the notice did not itself satisfy Lady Bradshaigh of the truth of the ending, as Barbauld suggests, but merely indicated Richardson’s readiness to do so by letters if she would provide him with an address: interestingly, it begins to seem that the initiative in

²³ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 225.

²⁴ Barbauld, IV, 177.

²⁵ Keymer, p. 479.

²⁶ *The Whitehall Evening-Post: Or, London Intelligencer*, No.386 (Saturday 30 July – Tuesday 2 August 1748).

²⁷ Refer to Keymer’s article for elaboration of his argument.

getting a correspondence established was as much his as hers.²⁸

Continuing with Belfour's opening letter dated 10 October 1748, apart from the occultist connotations of the letter it is, of course, blatantly rude, but Richardson chooses to overlook this, becoming intrigued rather than offended, as he is far more interested in acquiring an ardent fan than dispensing of a discourteous one. In the chapter on Richardson in his *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, Austin Dobson suggests that Belfour's agitated response to Clarissa's downfall would have 'thrown [Richardson] into a twitter of gratified agitation.'²⁹ The threat of 'Now make Lovelace and Clarissa unhappy if you dare' is the linchpin of the letter as Belfour lures Richardson into a challenge that he is unable to disregard. Belfour wants to make it clear to Richardson that he is not being pursued by a young and inexperienced adolescent – she was forty-three at the time – whose flight of fancy could be washed away at a moment's notice, and she goes to great lengths to assure him of her happily married status, and only wants 'the lovely pair' to experience the joys that she experiences.³⁰ Belfour furthers her threat by hoping that Richardson never has to feel more of her wrath by underestimating her, and confirms this haughty attitude by glibly adding that she is unconcerned if he considers her 'a fool'.³¹ She signs off her letter by telling Richardson that vanity has not driven her to write this letter, and that modesty forbids her to reveal her name, and she is therefore only to be known to him as Belfour. Richardson evidently replied to Belfour's first letter, and Eaves and Kimpel confirm this by telling us that the next extant exchange, which is undated by Barbauld, is in reply to 'R's answer to her 10 Oct'.³²

The contents of Richardson's missing letter are, of course, unknown, but it is possible to glean from Belfour's reply that she did not get her own way, and that her beloved heroine Clarissa does not get to marry a reformed rake. At first, she begs Richardson to consider his fans, claiming that she is being emotionally

²⁸ Keymer, pp. 479-480.

²⁹ Austin Dobson, *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, 2nd series (London: Chatto and Windus, 1894), p. 71.

³⁰ Barbauld, IV, 181. Dorothy Bellingham (Bradshaigh) remained engaged to Sir Roger Bradshaigh for nine years before she finally consented to marrying him on 6 April, 1731. The couple were childless and the Bradshaigh baronetcy died with Sir Roger in 1770.

³¹ Barbauld, IV, 182.

³² Eaves and Kimpel, p. 642. Bradshaigh's undated letter can be found in Barbauld, IV, 182-184. Eaves and Kimpel date this letter as '[c. 20 Oct.]' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 642).

pulled from one side to the other by him. Belfour continues to state the exact level of commitment and concern that she has for both Clarissa and her communication with Richardson, by describing the house full of guests that she has to leave intermittently because ‘write, I must, or die, for I can neither eat or sleep till I am disburdened of my load.’³³ While she readily admits that this burden is then passed on to Richardson, she is also quick to state that it is his own fault for writing back to her, and being ‘so infinitely obliging.’³⁴ For Belfour, Richardson’s interest is polite, but for Richardson it is fast becoming a compulsive necessity. Belfour goes on to hope that this will not be the last communication that they have, and she tries to explain the reason for her *nom de plume*, attesting that it is not out of any uncertainty in him, but because of her uncertainty about her conduct in her own letters. Belfour apologises for her first letter by admitting that she ‘took the liberty to use many hard sentences, and even curses’ in order to impress upon Richardson the opinions of his readers, and again she uses her moment to try to persuade Richardson to give her ‘reason to turn them [her curses] into blessings’.³⁵ Her tempered pleading does not stop there, as she begins to bring her letter to a close by calmly revealing to Richardson that while she does not expect a reply, she will get enormous satisfaction from learning that her letter has been delivered to him, and that she is able to read an advertisement that will one day say “‘This day is published, a continuation of The History of Miss Clarissa Harlowe!’”³⁶ After signing off her letter, Belfour adds a note telling Richardson that if he decides to change his narrative then she ‘will promise to read your history over, at least once in two years, as long as I live; and my last words are, - *be merciful!*’³⁷

Richardson’s first extant letter to Belfour is misdated by Barbauld as 6 October 1748.³⁸ He opens his letter by reassuring Belfour she need not be concerned at taking up his time, and that ‘Indeed, I admire it, and have reason to plume myself upon the interest you take in my story.’³⁹ Richardson wants to make it clear to

³³ Barbauld, IV, 183.

³⁴ Barbauld, IV, 183.

³⁵ Barbauld, IV, 184.

³⁶ Barbauld, IV, 184.

³⁷ Barbauld, IV, 184.

³⁸ Barbauld, IV, 185. Both Eaves and Kimpel and the original manuscripts tell us that its real date is 26 October 1748 (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 642. FM XI, 150-151).

³⁹ Barbauld, IV, 185.

Belfour that he is taking notice of both her and her opinions, as well as enjoying the attention she affords him, but gets straight to the crux of his fascination within the first twelve lines of the letter: 'I should be proud to know to whom I have the honour of addressing myself by pen and ink.'⁴⁰ As soon as Richardson has laid his cards upon the table he moves away from the root of his interest, gently softening his approach by describing his concerns at upsetting Belfour with his storyline. His diversion tactics, whilst they might be honourable, also serve as a means of further captivating his new correspondent, by attempting to demonstrate his own compassion, whilst at the same time trying to flatter her. Richardson is impressed by Belfour's commitment to 'a moral tale', and as well as making it clear to her that the characters in *Clarissa* are fictitious, he is also impressed that she is 'so sensible to the woes of others'.⁴¹ Richardson attempts to explain his reasons for concluding his story in the way that he does, and produces a fair argument which finishes with a crushing reality check: 'And what, Madam, is the temporary happiness we are so fond of? What the long life we are so apt to covet?'⁴² Richardson is emphasizing to Belfour that her choice of ending would be futile, and serves little or no purpose other than to dupe an audience into deluded momentary pleasure (perhaps a poignant commentary on eighteenth-century popular culture such as the pleasure garden or the vanity of fashion), and that even though his message may be difficult for some, that in itself is good enough reason for offering a more profound conclusion. Richardson believes, and wants, his novel to be as true a reflection of life as possible; he wants his novel to be a manual that both prepares a younger audience for what could potentially lie ahead of them, as well as one that may teach on how to prevent such possibilities. He considers himself to be a realist, and whilst he is prepared to cosset his message in a work of fiction he still wants the narrative to reflect true life.

Richardson is perplexed by Belfour's liking for Lovelace and cannot reconcile in himself why 'this character has met with so much favour from the good and virtuous', so much so that he is even more convinced that his ending is right.⁴³ Richardson's argument here is that if a character such as Lovelace is liked early on in the novel – when he feels he has written his indelicacies strongly enough –

⁴⁰ Barbauld, IV, 185.

⁴¹ Barbauld, IV, 186.

⁴² Barbauld, IV, 186.

⁴³ Barbauld, IV, 187.

then he has little choice but to propel those improprieties to catastrophic proportions in order to make his point; he is blaming his audience, namely Belfour, for liking Lovelace. His argument turns to the character of Clarissa and the way he has chosen to draw her, with Richardson defending his position as a writer who is determined to grow, stating that he needs to move on from the iconic figure that is Pamela Andrews. Richardson asks Belfour how he is supposed to do this if he were to keep Clarissa in the same mode as his earlier heroine, and he insists that this alternative would not be good for him as a writer, or proper for his audience who need to learn. It is clear to see that Richardson, without any suggestion of irony, is entirely comfortable in his own self-importance, as he considers it his duty as a successful writer to teach the public through his novels. At this point Richardson moves back to Lovelace and presents Belfour with a sardonic alternative befitting her favoured conclusion.⁴⁴ Richardson makes the point that it would be impossible to conclude as Belfour would like, because in his initial preface to volume one of *Clarissa*, he claims that his intention is to disprove the ‘pernicious notion [...] that a reformed rake makes the best husband’, that this sort of reformation cannot happen instantaneously when such behaviour has been ‘so natural’ and so extensive.⁴⁵ Richardson’s plot is, of course, a moral one rather than a realistic one. He confirms to Belfour that he has personal experience of ‘felicity in marriage’, as does she, and that he would much rather endow Clarissa with a man whose ‘past life should have sat easier upon him; both for his sake, and for the sake of her pious heart’, than with a man whose past is riddled with ‘ruin’ and ‘wicked[ness]’.⁴⁶

Richardson’s next concern is that death has become ‘so terrible to human nature, it is time to familiarize it to us’, and he sees it as his duty to write it into his novel, and in order to further his argument, he unashamedly quotes himself

⁴⁴ Richardson uses ‘another Lovelace’ – suggesting that if he draws the initial example then more will follow – to make his point, the general premise being that the young rake fully comprehends that he is able to behave abominably to young women in his youth, that it will be perfectly acceptable for him to do so and that he can reform as he matures, having left countless casualties of his contemptible immaturity along the wayside (Barbauld, IV, 188). Richardson’s mordant suggestion is that the young rake need only have one epiphanic moment where he decides that he is ‘tired with rambling’ and then ‘may graciously extend my hand’ in order to ‘reward that virtue’ to a young woman who has shown such resilience and understanding; and all of this is excusable ‘because I am handsome and a humorous fellow’ (Barbauld, IV, 189-190).

⁴⁵ Barbauld, IV, 190.

⁴⁶ Barbauld, IV, 191.

from Clarissa.⁴⁷ At this point Richardson refers Belfour to the ‘excellent judge, and sound Christian, Mr. Addison’, and cites a reference for her to consider (‘his *Spectator*. Vol. I. No. 40’).⁴⁸ Richardson begins to bring his letter to a close, and tells Belfour that he is ‘discouraged and mortified’ by the news that she will be unable to accept any further volumes of *Clarissa* unless he alters his conclusion in favour of hers, and he attempts to persuade her into doing so by claiming that there are ‘scenes to come that will affect so tender a heart as yours.’⁴⁹ He persists in sending her the finished fifth volume: ‘directed to Mrs. Belfour, (I must not dare to hope for the honour of a more welcome address) to the Bookseller at _____.’, and hopes that she ‘will favour me with a letter upon it’.⁵⁰ Richardson is actively encouraging his anonymous correspondent to communicate with him, which will appeal to her developing ego as well as to his already established one, but he does not leave it there, taking one further step:

And it would be difficult in me to deny myself the hope
of such a correspondent to the end of my life. I love Miss
Howe next to Clarissa; and I see very evidently in your
letters that you are the twin-sister of that lady. And indeed
I adore your spirit and your earnestness,

And am, Madam,
with the greatest respect,
your most sincere admirer
and humble servant,
S. Richardson.⁵¹

Richardson’s gift of commitment and eternal friendship to Belfour gestures his unrelenting need for appreciation and popularity. In this statement we see the heights to which Richardson is prepared to go by the comparison he draws between Belfour and one of the major characters in *Clarissa*, Anna Howe. By

⁴⁷ Barbauld, IV, 192.

⁴⁸ Barbauld, IV, 193. The *Spectator* article referred to by Richardson was written by Joseph Addison on Monday 16 April 1711. Addison opens with a quote from Horace, and then goes on to discuss that ‘The English Writers of Tragedy are possessed with a Notion, that when they represent a virtuous or innocent Person in Distress, they ought not to leave him till they have delivered him out of his Troubles, or made him triumph over his Enemies. This Error they have been led into by a ridiculous Doctrine in modern Criticism, that they are obliged to an equal Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, and an impartial Execution of Poetical Justice.’ (Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, No.40, Vol. I, 9th edn (London: J. Tonson, 1729), p. 156)).

⁴⁹ Barbauld, IV, 193.

⁵⁰ Barbauld, IV, 193.

⁵¹ Barbauld, IV, 193-194.

doing this he is attempting to cement her allegiance to him with a reward that consigns her to literary posterity and of course all of this is carefully buffered between his own humble plea, and human, not fictitious, personal compliment.

The Richardson-Belfour letters are a *melange* of emotions with Belfour coming across as flirty, spirited and articulate, while at the same time being demanding, opinionated and angry. Yet Richardson tends to remain the same throughout: pleased, patient and desperate. Belfour has the air of a confident young woman, being often pert and precocious, who, at times, realises this and deems it necessary to remind Richardson of her age. His novel has resurrected the demon which once resided in her youthful self, and she is obsessed with Richardson's tortured heroine, Clarissa Harlowe:

This should have gone with my last; but I was afraid of being too late for the post. Here is another scheme, which came into my wild head; and, for my life, I could not help transmitting it to paper. Every thought relating to this affair takes possession of me like infatuation; for I am drawn from one thing to another, spite of all resistance.⁵²

During the first two thirds of the Belfour letters this overt display of mania for *Clarissa* provides the main theme for their exchange, and after describing her level of passion, Belfour offers a number of alternative endings for Richardson to contemplate, but to little avail. Her sister, Lady Elizabeth Echlin, also wrote an alternative ending to *Clarissa*, but its exact date remains elusive.⁵³ However, Tom Keymer attempts to apportion an approximation by informing us that 'She [Lady Echlin] sent the manuscript to Richardson only in 1755, but probably conceived the idea on reading the final instalment in winter 1748-9'.⁵⁴ Keymer cites his source from a letter included in Barbauld's fifth volume of Richardson's *Correspondence*, when on the 12 August 1754 Elizabeth Echlin writes to

⁵² Barbauld, IV, 202-203.

⁵³ For a more detailed account of Lady Elizabeth Echlin's work refer to Lady Elizabeth Echlin, *An Alternative Ending to Richardson's Clarissa*, ed. Dimiter Daphinoff (Bern: Francke Publishing, 1982). Daphinoff also includes in his appendix the transcribed letters of 'Richardson's reaction of February 1755' where Richardson thanks Lady Echlin for two letters dated 21 December 1754 and 22 January 1755, one of which included the 'two beginning Sheets of your History of Clarissa' (Daphinoff, p. 176); we can therefore assume that Lady Echlin began writing her ending sometime before December 1754.

⁵⁴ Tom Keymer, *Richardson's Clarissa and the Eighteenth Century Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 215.

Richardson complaining that “in the midst of my intolerable vexation, I endeavoured to divert my thoughts from horrible scenes by the strength of fancy” which prompts her to write an alternative conclusion to his story.⁵⁵ Belfour’s first ‘scheme’ comes after she has discovered Clarissa’s rape.⁵⁶ Initially, Belfour had refused to read the fifth volume that Richardson had sent her, adopting instead ‘a kind friend who will first look it over’.⁵⁷ However she then found herself ‘prevailed upon to read a part of your story’ and implored Richardson to ‘Blot out but one night, and the villainous laudanum’; she proposed an ending whereby the rape failed.⁵⁸ He refused. Her next suggestion is to render Lovelace dangerously ill as a result of Clarissa’s rejection of him. Belfour suggests that Clarissa, upon Lovelace’s dying request and with Dr. Lewen’s encouragement, should visit him and that her promise of marriage would be enough to elicit a full recovery.⁵⁹ Again Richardson rejected her suggestions. The earlier quote is taken from the fifth letter in the Barbauld edition and is therefore written at the very early stages of their relationship when very little else apart from *Clarissa*, and the effects it is having on Belfour, are discussed. Just prior to this quote, at the beginning of the letter, we see that it opens with elements of humour as Belfour recognises her obsessive behaviour by stating that ‘I shall frighten you with another letter so soon after my last’, and then trying to imagine how Richardson will respond to it.⁶⁰ She considers herself to be ‘impertinent, rude, tiresome’ and offers Richardson the opportunity to ‘abuse me, scold me’, but hopes that he will ‘bear with me’.⁶¹ However, with each letter a little more personal information is seeped into her dialogue enabling us, and of course Richardson, to build a picture of the anonymous letter writer.

Belfour is obviously a passionate woman who, whilst being straightforward in her approach to Richardson’s novel, is also very aware of her excitable behaviour, and she thinks nothing of putting him in his place. In a letter undated by Barbauld, but approximately dated by Eaves and Kimpel (‘17 Nov? 1748’), Belfour tells Richardson to ‘be quiet’ when she delivers what she thinks will be his response to

⁵⁵ Keymer, p. 215.

⁵⁶ Barbauld, IV, 202.

⁵⁷ Barbauld, IV, 200.

⁵⁸ Barbauld, IV, 200-201. Keymer, p. 214.

⁵⁹ Barbauld, IV, 203.

⁶⁰ Barbauld, IV, 202.

⁶¹ Barbauld, IV, 202.

her liking of Lovelace.⁶² Just prior to this premature reprimand, Belfour bestows Richardson with a gift to outdo all gifts: the recognition that he has the power ‘to save his [Lovelace’s] soul’, and even though it is wise to remember that these are only fictional characters, they seem to have been very real to Belfour who ably argues her case for them throughout this early communication.⁶³ In his book *The Gift Relationship*, Richard Titmuss argues ‘about the role of altruism in modern society’, and how man learns to give despite living in ‘societies continually multiplying new desires and syndicalist private wants concerned with property, status and power.’⁶⁴ It could be argued that Belfour is attempting to appeal, despite his fame, wealth and influence, to Richardson’s altruistic side by enticing him with the possible notion of himself as a deist moralist. However, if this argument is to be considered authentic, then Belfour’s appeal to Richardson can only ever have been intended as a way of attain something herself: Clarissa’s chastity undisturbed and her death reversed. For Belfour, a reformed rake makes a good husband only if he has reformed at the peak of his shameful behaviour but, unlike Richardson, she is willing to give him the benefit of the doubt and she is ever confident that whatever conclusion Richardson comes to, his story will be ‘well executed’.⁶⁵ Even in these early letters Belfour expresses her concern at making herself known to Richardson stating that: ‘I am often confounded with shame, disguised as I am’, but she is encouraged by Richardson’s replies and states that: ‘you have told me you do not dislike my correspondence, and I act as if I believed you. See what your complaisant encouragement has drawn upon you’.⁶⁶ Richardson does indeed enjoy her correspondence and encourages it not only by sending her the final volumes of *Clarissa*, but by sustaining the myth surrounding his ‘incognita’.⁶⁷

The next two Belfour letters to appear in Barbauld’s edition are both undated, but Eaves and Kimpel attempt to place the first as ‘[Early Dec.?’] 1748, and the

⁶² Eaves and Kimpel, p. 643. Barbauld, IV, 195.

⁶³ Barbauld, IV, 195.

⁶⁴ Richard Titmuss, *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1970) p. 12.

⁶⁵ Barbauld, IV, 198.

⁶⁶ Barbauld, IV, 199.

⁶⁷ In this fourth letter Belfour adds a postscript telling Richardson that she has received ‘your fifth volume’ and that she is ‘really quite ashamed of receiving such a favour, as I think myself undeserving of it.’ (Barbauld, IV, 199-200). Belfour also wrote under the pseudonym ‘Incognita’ at times.

second as '15 Dec.' 1748, and together they cover approximately thirty-two pages.⁶⁸ The first of the two is from Belfour to Richardson and the second is Richardson in reply. Belfour's letter is a contradictory mix of emotions as she begins in her usual manner of disdain for Richardson and his literary decisions by sarcastically informing him that 'I shall never look on the outside without a sigh, and, I fear, a harsh thought for the author.'⁶⁹ Belfour is angry that Richardson has cast aside her ideas, and suggests to him 'that the giving another pain must sensibly touch you', and she questions his claim at having a tender heart by stating that someone who 'would be able to draw those shocking scenes' is surely questionable.⁷⁰ The early part of Belfour's letter is certainly an attack on Richardson, and she informs him that she has read and seen many tragedies, but it is 'my first favourite, your divine *Clarissa*' that has affected her most strongly, and that the others 'were but momentary pains' compared to those she feels for his heroine.⁷¹ Belfour's level of commitment to *Clarissa* is prodigious considering that she is only a work of fiction; it is as if a member of her own family has died, and she begins, perhaps somewhat inappropriately, to question Richardson's own experience of intimate death:

I ask you again, Sir, had you suffered her to live a reasonable number of years happily, would she not then have had so good a title to a heavenly crown, as she has at the early years of nineteen?

We who suffer so much by the early death of those we love, and from whom we expect examples worthy of imitation, may be allowed to call such deaths untimely. How could anyone think, with pleasure, of parting with what they dearly love, supposing, as I have said before, their end ever so glorious? could you, Sir? Have you ever made it your own case? Though you must have very different notions from those I am possessed with, or you would never have deprived us of our beloved *Clarissa*. How could you? but I have said abundance on this head to no purpose.⁷²

⁶⁸ Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 643-644.

⁶⁹ Barbauld, IV, 207.

⁷⁰ Barbauld, IV, 207-208.

⁷¹ Barbauld, IV, 209.

⁷² Barbauld, IV, 209-210.

Even though Belfour has stated her case time and time again, she is still continuing in her attempt to disprove Richardson's narrative choice by trying to shame him into compliance by drawing his attention to the tender age of his heroine. Belfour's initial argument is that if Clarissa had lived then she would have had so much more to offer to the world, and would have effortlessly earned an even higher level of divine status than the one she is already occupying. Her argument escalates, and moves into the area of personal tragedy, with Belfour claiming that those who have experienced death at a young age are qualified to suggest when or when not a death is deemed premature. She asks Richardson if he has any experience of this, and deduces that he must not as he would never have 'deprived us of our beloved Clarissa' if he had.⁷³ Belfour continues her discussion of *Clarissa* for a further two pages before moving the letter on to a request that Richardson should stop sending her volumes of the novel because she 'cannot promise to read them'.⁷⁴ The letter moves on to Joseph Addison who, Belfour is relieved to hear, Richardson applauds; for her 'It is in the interest of the whole public, that good writers should be good men', and given Belfour's 'hating' of Richardson it is surprising to hear a change in the tone of her letter as she places Richardson's opinion on a higher level.⁷⁵ It is at this point that the politer side of Belfour's character appears, and she tells Richardson that her requests were only ever an attempt 'at moving you by intreaties to compassion; but you were "Deaf as the winds, and as the rocks unshaken."' ⁷⁶She informs him that he is under no obligation to reply to her letter, but she continues to try to impress upon Richardson just how seriously she has taken his novel and tells him that she is 'trying to copy your christian [Clarissa]' and even though she may not wholly succeed, she 'will venture to say I have as good a meaning'.⁷⁷ The gentler approach that Belfour has adopted toward the end of the letter becomes even more temperate as she fishes for recognition and compliments from Richardson, and even though she has boldly attested that he need not reply to her, she is most definitely trying to entice him into further correspondence; but Richardson needs little persuasion. Belfour has asked Richardson, 'in mine, I think of the 17th of last

⁷³ Barbauld, IV, 210.

⁷⁴ Barbauld, IV, 212.

⁷⁵ Barbauld, IV, 213 and 201.

⁷⁶ Barbauld, IV, 214.

⁷⁷ Barbauld, IV, 215.

month, “if, after what I had said, I was to be condemned, and forever out of favour?””, but he did not provide her with an answer.⁷⁸ Belfour presses for an answer by asking him ‘Must I no longer value myself upon being a daughter of your mind?’ before answering it herself: ‘No; I doubt not; after being accused of indelicacy, want of fortitude, and, as a favourer of libertines, I cannot expect it.’⁷⁹ As the letter draws to a close Belfour, once again, begs Richardson not to send his volumes because she ‘cannot see my amiable Clarissa die; it will hurt my heart, and *durably*’, and she begins to doubt if she will ever read the end, for she has become ‘indifferent now about every character in the book’, and wishes that the Harlowe family ‘had all been dead ten years ago now.’⁸⁰ Curiously the novel had not even been conceived ten years previously, which indicates further the depth with which the novel has penetrated her. Before signing off, Belfour assures Richardson that all that has passed between them has only been shared with her partner ‘whose fidelity I have these seventeen years experienced’, and she apologises to Richardson ‘for all the trouble I have given you’.⁸¹

Richardson’s long reply was written, according to Eaves and Kimpel, on the 15 December 1748, and is largely a discussion about *Clarissa* as he defends his position.⁸² Early on Richardson makes the point that he intends his ‘great end’ to be an ‘*example and warning*’, comparing it to *Romeo and Juliet* which he claims is a tale that ‘may be called truly *horrid*’; Richardson reminds Belfour of Juliet’s death scene, and outlines for her what makes for good tragedy: ‘Terror, and fear, and pity, are essentials in a tragic performance.’⁸³ For Richardson a true representative of life on the page requires dire moments, and that is what he is trying to do in *Clarissa*, otherwise it would be full of ‘kill-time amusements’ which would be fatal ‘to thinking minds!’.⁸⁴ His argument continues by questioning the originality of Belfour’s proposed ending, that there is nothing

⁷⁸ Barbauld, IV, 215.

⁷⁹ Barbauld, IV, 215.

⁸⁰ Barbauld, IV, 216. Despite claims that she will never read the end of *Clarissa*, Belfour of course does, sitting down to read ‘the last of your Clarissa’ on ‘January 6th, 1748-9’ (Barbauld, IV, 238). Five days later she has finished it.

⁸¹ Barbauld, IV, 216-217.

⁸² Eaves and Kimpel, p. 644.

⁸³ Barbauld, IV, 218-219. The *OED* tells us that the definition of tragedy is ‘a play or other literary work of a serious or disastrous conclusion’, ‘An unhappy or fatal event or series of events in real life; a dreadful calamity or disaster’, or a ‘Sad story, unhappy fate, misery, misfortune; *esp.* sorrowful end, violent death.’

⁸⁴ Barbauld, IV, 219.

unusual about it and that there are enough draw backs in a happy marriage let alone one that begins with hard times. He takes his argument one step further by imagining Clarissa with children, and asks Belfour to imagine them as adults. Richardson suggests that he would expect to see elements of their father in them, but the father 'before his reformation' as well as after; he would also expect there to be elements of Clarissa's disruptive behaviour present, when she made 'her and all her family long unhappy'.⁸⁵ The crux of the argument is that Clarissa and Lovelace would produce troublesome children, and in turn their children would produce troublesome children and on the argument, and the genetic pool, goes.

What is notable about this discussion, and the Richardson-Belfour relationship as a whole, is that both sides completely engage with the possibility of real life in fictional characters. It is unfair to accuse a deluded Belfour of taking it too far, or to blame her for believing that what Richardson has written as true, because Richardson acts as if he believes it too, and is therefore encouraging her to argue about his fiction as if it were fact. Richardson wants his deserving characters to go on to greater things, to reach Heaven and live there in a higher state, for he realises that he is unable to create a heavenly state for them in this world. Richardson is arguing from a writers' point of view; perspicaciously he recognises that an audience is conditioned to want certain things, and he tries to explain to Belfour that even if he had given Clarissa the happy ending with the perfect marriage *et al*, then the public would have still wanted something more, and that this is human nature. It is at this point that Richardson moves on and faces the potentially provocative question proposed by Belfour in her last letter: has he suffered any great loss in his life? Richardson answers succinctly, and with dramatic pause: 'Ah, Madam! And do you thus call upon me? – Forgive an interrupting sigh, and allow me a short silence.'⁸⁶ The letter is broken by '* * * * *' but for how long in terms of hours and minutes, we do not know.⁸⁷ There is no extra date added to the letter which could tell us if Richardson had left it a day or more, so we can assume that this was purely for dramatic purpose, to let Belfour know that she has over-stepped the boundary of acceptable questioning, and to put her securely in her place. The letter resumes with Richardson saying 'I

⁸⁵ Barbauld, IV, 223.

⁸⁶ Barbauld, IV, 226.

⁸⁷ Barbauld, IV, 226.

told you, Madam, that I have been twice married – both times happily’, and this leads into a three page commentary about Richardson’s family and its losses (‘six sons (all my sons!) and two daughters [...] friends [...] A father [...] Two brothers [...] No less than eleven affecting deaths attacked me in two years’).⁸⁸ He also claims that his nervous disorders are due to these bereavements, and that as a result he has ‘for seven years past have forborn wine, flesh, and fish: and at this time I and my family are in mourning for a good sister’.⁸⁹ Richardson uses this opportunity to strengthen his argument for a tragic *Clarissa* ending by asking Belfour if:

From these affecting dispensations will you not allow me, Madam, to remind an unthinking world, immersed in pleasures, what a life this is, of which they are so fond? and to endeavour to arm them against the most affecting changes and chances of it?⁹⁰

Richardson uses Belfour’s inopportune question to corroborate his argument, and puts her in a place of no return; he is asking her to allow him the good grace to try to help people, to try to minimise their suffering by preparing them. Arguably, Richardson’s predominant wish would be to be seen as a moral pedagogue, but this altruistic attitude which weaves through his life is something that Richardson would also like to be seen to have as he views his didacticism as an altruistic gesture. However, it is patently obvious that, while there are elements of it present, he requires some sort of return on his investment. Titmuss defines altruism as ‘in general terms a desire to help’, but discovered when a survey was carried out into why blood donors freely gave blood, that the answers became more specific.⁹¹ His claims are that there were ‘many stereotyped answers like ‘Because I want to help to save lives in hospital’’, but he discovered that people ‘singled out’ specific institutions to help, such as the National Health Service, because ‘I get my surgical shoes thro’ the N.H.S. This [blood donation] is some

⁸⁸ Barbauld, IV, 226-227.

⁸⁹ Barbauld, IV, 228. Richardson’s doctor, George Cheyne, recommended a vegetarian diet for Richardson, which he purports to have adhered to, along with a chamber horse which was used for indoor activity (Carroll, p.18. Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 63-63). Carroll tells of a humorous observation, made by Austin Dobson in *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, of Richardson ‘bobbing up and down daily, at stated hours, upon this curious substitute for the saddle’ (Carroll, p.18n. Dobson, p. 56). Richardson was unable to ride a horse (Dobson, p. 55. Barbauld, I, p. clxxx).

⁹⁰ Barbauld, IV, 228.

⁹¹ Titmuss, p. 226.

slight return and I want to help people'.⁹² So even when presenting one's self in what is considered to be a totally altruistic situation, there is still, at times, thought of give and return.

Richardson's letter to Belfour continues to discuss marriage and the notion of 'early death', and he draws her attention to the varying stages of marriage from first love in early married life, via 'the *intenser*, the *truer* love' to older love which upon 'a separation may be called a separation of souls.'⁹³ Richardson methodically and sequentially moves through Belfour's letter, embellishing each point as he goes so that his reply stretches to double the length of her original letter. He teases her when she attempts to be serious with him, and finds himself entertained by this. Richardson moves his letter back to *Clarissa*, more specifically to Lovelace, and tells of the surprise he received at the realisation that what he considered to be 'too wicked, too intriguing, too revengeful' a character was, in fact, precisely what appealed most to his virtuous female readers.⁹⁴ This truly perplexes Richardson, and he reports to Belfour that he had 'tried his [Lovelace's] character, as it was first drawn, and his last exit, on a young lady of seventeen', who had cried at Lovelace's death, which forced him to throw 'into his character some deeper shades', but not even these appear to have worked and he believes that 'had I made him a worse man, he must have been a devil – *for devils believe and tremble*.'⁹⁵ Richardson is understandably cautious about writing the devil, but his attempts to make Lovelace truly villainous and without appeal have fallen upon deaf ears, including that of his heroine, and Belfour is here to point that out to him. Their argument spills over into the notion of temptation and the assurance of matrimony, with Belfour suggesting that anyone who is "tempted by so old a bait as a promise of marriage, deserve not that justice", but Richardson refutes this by claiming that 'if it be justice, and justice surely it is to a poor creature who has risked her body, soul, and reputation [...] she has a title to it.'⁹⁶ Belfour has tried to get Richardson to practice what he preaches and asks him what he would do were he in Lovelace's position, and Richardson replies with 'What we *would* do, or what we *should* do, Madam, are two very different

⁹² Titmuss, pp. 226-227.

⁹³ Barbauld, IV, 231-232.

⁹⁴ Barbauld, IV, 234.

⁹⁵ Barbauld, IV, 234.

⁹⁶ Barbauld, IV, 236.

things'.⁹⁷ He then continues to state that, given the circumstances, he would like to think that in his reformed state he would have waited until 'I had performed the condition [marriage] upon which it [the promise] was pledged.'⁹⁸ The letter begins to draw to a close, and Richardson is aware that Belfour has his entire novel with her (he has sent the last volumes to her); he begs that even though she may not read it, would she at least be certain of accepting it, for in thirty years time maybe she will feel like dipping into it along with other books that will perhaps appeal to her then, and she will be able to look back at a time which was 'overwhelmed with luxury, and abandoned to sound and senselessness.'⁹⁹

The eighth (a short note of four lines), ninth and tenth letters were all written in January 1748-9, and the first and second of these make up one long letter which was, according to Barbauld's edition, started on 6 January 1748-9 and resumed five days later on 11 January. Barbauld adds a note that Belfour had not yet received Richardson's previous (15 December 1748) letter. The short note simply tells Richardson that Belfour has at last returned home, and that she is now able to settle down 'to read with attention, would I could say pleasure, the last of your *Clarissa*.'¹⁰⁰ Within five days Belfour is writing to Richardson (letter dated 'Jan. 11th.') that she has read his 'inimitable piece' and that 'may it have the wished-for effect!'¹⁰¹ Belfour is undeniably praiseworthy, and stresses that her intention was to write down 'what I thought particular beauties' but, due to the enormity of the task, she had abandoned it because her 'weakened' constitution as a result of reading his work had rendered it impossible.¹⁰² Belfour has decided that she would now be able to read any tragedy because all of them would pale into insignificance alongside *Clarissa*. Much of the letter is designed to inform Richardson of the enormous effect that his work, and him forcing it upon her, has had, and she shows herself off to be completely usurped by the world of Richardson's novel:

Had you seen me, I surely should have moved your pity.
When alone, in agonies would I lay down the book, take
it up again, walk about the room, let fall a flood of tears,

⁹⁷ Barbauld, IV, 236.

⁹⁸ Barbauld, IV, 237.

⁹⁹ Barbauld, IV, 238.

¹⁰⁰ Barbauld, IV, 238.

¹⁰¹ Barbauld, IV, 239.

¹⁰² Barbauld, IV, 239.

wipe my eyes, read again, perhaps not three lines, throw away the book, crying out, excuse me, good Mr. Richardson, I cannot go on; it is your fault – you have done more than I can bear; threw myself upon my couch to compose, recollecting my promise (which a thousand times I wished had not been made); again I read, again I acted the same part: sometimes agreeably interrupted by my dear man, who was at that time labouring through the sixth volume with a heart capable of impression equal to my own, tho' the effects shewn in a more justifiable manner, which I believe may be compared to what Mr. Belford felt when he found the beauteous sufferer in her prison room: "Something rose in my throat, I know not what, which made me guggle as it were for speech."

Seeing me so moved, he begged, for God's sake, I would read no more; kindly threatened to take the book from me, but upon my pleading my promise, suffered me to go on. That promise is now fulfilled, and I am thankful the heavy task is over, tho' the effects are not.¹⁰³

Belfour's obsessive state, her intensely histrionic description and the remainder of her letter serve as a credible reminder of her position as his number one fan. If we are to believe Belfour's message, and there is little reason to doubt it, then we can see that not only is she inclined toward theatrics, but that she would suitably fit within one of Richardson's novels. Even though she begins the letter with polite, but passively unforgiving tones, it soon moves away, once more, from victim to aggressor and before long she happily positions herself as Richardson's attacker. Belfour will never accept his outcome, being 'more than ever averse to your catastrophe'; she considers Richardson to be 'of a cruel disposition; just now is one of the times I hate you, and I want to say something still more spiteful', but for once denies herself the opportunity.¹⁰⁴ The remainder of the letter, some four and a half pages, becomes repetitive as Belfour again reiterates her liking for Lovelace and the mistake that Richardson has made in not reforming him. She tackles the subject of developing love within marriage, something which she believes has been denied to Clarissa Harlowe, and she strongly maintains that she would rather have lost a dear friend in old age than to have lost her early and not to have had the opportunity to share whatever life had offered them together. Belfour brings her letter to a close by asking Richardson if he is able to entertain

¹⁰³ Barbould, IV, 240-242.

¹⁰⁴ Barbould, IV, 245.

her with ‘a hint’ at what his next work may be.¹⁰⁵ After signing off her letter, she enquires as to whether Richardson knows of ‘any such painter as Mr. Highmore, or has he any such picture in his possession which we are to suppose was taken for Clarissa?’, and she informs him of her intention to visit London ‘before I am a year older’, and hopes that she will be able to view any painting of Clarissa that is available.¹⁰⁶ The last sentence sees Belfour flirtatiously tempting Richardson once again by claiming: ‘I shall long to see you too, Sir, and perhaps may contrive *that*, tho’ unknown to you.’¹⁰⁷

The tenth letter, which is from Richardson to Belfour, is undated in Barbauld but placed as ‘[Mid-Jan.] 1749’ by Eaves and Kimpel.¹⁰⁸ The seven page letter begins with a playful reprimand about Belfour’s use of the term ‘*old maids*’, he tells her that for a woman to refer to another woman as such exhibits ‘a degree of cruelty’.¹⁰⁹ Five pages of the letter are dedicated to a defence of ‘old maids’, with Richardson saying that if he were to build a hospital for fallen women he would employ them ‘as their guardians, sisters, and directresses’.¹¹⁰ Once he has made his lengthy point, Richardson informs Belfour that ‘Mr. Highmore is an eminent painter, in Holborn-row, Lincoln’s-inn-fields, the same who published twelve prints of Pamela’, and he offers her a brief summation of Highmore’s work on Clarissa and the Harlowe family, he also informs her of another portrait of Clarissa, this time ‘in crayons’ and owned by a physician known as Dr. Chancey who resides in Austin Friars.’¹¹¹ Richardson attempts to seduce Belfour into revealing her real self, by satisfying her earlier fears at no longer ‘being called “The daughter of my own mind and heart”’.¹¹²

Between the last letter (above) and the next letter (dated 29 October 1749), there is a gap of nine months in both Barbauld’s edition, and the Forster manuscripts (Eaves and Kimpel also found no other existing letters). However,

¹⁰⁵ Barbauld, IV, 249.

¹⁰⁶ Barbauld, IV, 249.

¹⁰⁷ Barbauld, IV, 249.

¹⁰⁸ Eaves and Kimpel, p. 645.

¹⁰⁹ Barbauld, IV, 250.

¹¹⁰ Barbauld, IV, 252. Richardson provided money (‘ten pounds, ten shillings’, Eaves and Kimpel, p. 465) for Magdalen House, and had been interested in the institution for sometime (in his novel *Sir Charles Grandison* the protagonist suggests the building of such a place). Lady Bradshaigh visited the same institution whilst on a visit to London in 1759, and by 1760 Richardson was an ‘annual governor’ there (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 465).

¹¹¹ Barbauld, IV, 255-256. Austin Friars is a short street which lies between Old Broad Street and Throgmorton Avenue just north of the London Stock Exchange (North East of Salisbury-court).

¹¹² Barbauld, IV, 256. See letter dated ‘[Early Dec?]’ 1748, in Eaves and Kimpel, p. 643.

the tone of Belfour's letter would lead us to believe that there had been frequent exchanges between them, as it is far more friendly and informal, with Belfour thanking Richardson for indulging her when she knows she only gives him trouble.¹¹³ She has recently been pitying Richardson 'and every one who is tied to business', and she wishes that she could 'take away all but your pen' as a duty to mankind.¹¹⁴ Belfour returns to her beloved *Clarissa*, and enters into a debate about Clarissa and Anna Howe's preference to remain single rather than to marry; Belfour again talks of them as if they were real people and claims that according to Richardson both women 'would have chosen the single state' rather than enter into the life of a married woman, but she attests that they may, in time, have changed their minds. Belfour is speaking from experience as she begins to tell the story of someone she knows (herself) who had 'obstinately refused her lover for nine years, and was prevailed upon to alter her opinion in the tenth'.¹¹⁵ Belfour, as a true fan and student of *Clarissa*, tries hard to find inconsistencies between what Richardson argues in his letters and what he writes in his novel, and she looks to his characters – namely Anna Howe – as well as to the *Spectator* for endorsement of her argument: "I am verily persuaded, that whatever is delightful in human life, is to be enjoyed in greater perfection in the married, than the single condition," – No.476, vol.vii', before then boldly announcing that 'I am verily persuaded too; for which reason I would have married Clarissa.'¹¹⁶ As the letter draws to a close Belfour assertively informs Richardson that she is infinitely aware of the self-gratification that he receives from berating her at any opportunity, but warns him that she, in return, will do the same whenever she finds an opportune moment. In one final attempt to fell Richardson, Belfour states that she is willing to admit her mistakes, but is reticent to surrender a point until she is absolutely satisfied with its outcome.

Belfour sends another letter to Richardson, this time undated by Barbauld.¹¹⁷ The letter is long, covering twenty-two pages, and is a reply to an earlier letter from Richardson in which it would seem that he had told her of 'five things to

¹¹³ Barbauld, IV, 257.

¹¹⁴ Barbauld, IV, 258.

¹¹⁵ Barbauld, IV, 260.

¹¹⁶ Barbauld, IV, 260-261.

¹¹⁷ Eaves and Kimpel suspect it was written in '[Early Nov.?] 1749, but admit that it could be made up of 'more than one letter, written anytime during Jan-Nov. 1749' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 648).

commend me for, to one that calls for blame', and she notes that it is Richardson's habit to add a slight bitterness to a sweet 'tincture'.¹¹⁸ In places the letter is repetitive, but after acknowledging that she likes the sound of Richardson's wife – he has obviously sent a description of her to Belfour – and has admitted to enjoying 'An agreeable party at home, or in a friends house', she states that she is at that moment hosting one herself.¹¹⁹ After a short description of her house guests and their activities, Belfour again moves on to her heroine, Clarissa, who has taught her to rise early so that she can employ much of her writing activity before her guests awake. Belfour commends Richardson for writing such 'charming' scenes so early in Clarissa's morning, and claims that it is due to them that she now finds herself in this position.¹²⁰ From Clarissa, Belfour has also learned how to manage her time, and is trying to better her ill use of it, stating that if Richardson could see her diary 'how angry you would sometimes be!'¹²¹ Belfour likes to adopt the position of a disobedient child to Richardson's scolding father-figure, as it is a way of flirting with him without appearing too inappropriate.¹²² At this stage, Belfour is tending not to refer to Clarissa in general terms, as a novel, but prefers to refer only to her as a person, as if she were a close friend. She moves back to the original subject of their impending meeting, and asks Richardson for some information about his usual whereabouts (church, park etc), but she wants to impress upon him that she realises that 'After the trouble and plague I have given you, if you can bear my name, it is all I ought to expect'.¹²³ Then, as if to assuage her demands she, unexpectedly, offers Richardson an invitation to visit her, and in doing so leaks a small clue as to her identity as she admits to him that she is not 'your Devonshire lady [...]. Lancashire if you please.'¹²⁴ Belfour and Richardson are caught up in an uncovering game, the dynamics of which are played out within the flirtatious letter-writing that passes between them. By maintaining her anonymity, and only

¹¹⁸ Barbauld, IV, 262.

¹¹⁹ Barbauld, IV, 262-263. Belfour repeats her anxiety about meeting Richardson, stating that she is likely to appear 'more stupid than saucy' if they were to meet, and therefore declines his latest invitation.

¹²⁰ Barbauld, IV, 264.

¹²¹ Barbauld, IV, 264.

¹²² Later in the letter, Belfour thanks Richardson for his 'fatherly proffered assistance' when she discusses her own faults (Barbauld, IV, 271). Austin Dobson refers to much of the Belfour-Richardson relationship as 'decorous elderly flirtation' (Dobson, p. 71).

¹²³ Barbauld, IV, 266.

¹²⁴ Barbauld, IV, 266.

ever interacting by letter, Belfour prolongs the flirtation which, consequently, allows her to get away with more; the opportunity for reinvention that the epistolary system provides is what allows the flirt. Just as in *Clarissa*, the letter can act as a cipher between two people enabling them to behave differently than if they were meeting in person, it is a conduit through which to act out other, perhaps covert, thoughts and feelings. Belfour is by no means the only one culpable, as Richardson encourages and colludes with her plan; they are inextricably linked, dependant upon each others next move. The enjoyment and safety that the flirtatious letter-writing provides, can ensure that blushes are spared, that the opportunity for erasure exists, and that the perpetrators are able to relish a liberty otherwise restricted by the immediacy of face to face communication. The opportunity for extraction, without ever having to reveal oneself, that exists with anonymous letter-writing is also worth considering, as Belfour may have begun her communiqué with Richardson with this in mind, but due to his desire to amass a body of fans and his eagerness to comply with her wishes, their flirtation developed into a regular and prolonged correspondence.

As we have seen, both Richardson and Belfour share an interest in the welfare of fallen women, and Belfour satisfies Richardson's curiosity by telling him, in an undated letter, the story of her latest 'Magdalen'.¹²⁵ The story takes up two pages of Barbauld's edition and, after 'this sorrowful tale' is told, it ends with Belfour asking Richardson if he knows of any 'good old maids' who would take her in as a serving girl.¹²⁶ Belfour tells Richardson off for his earlier reprimand of her attitude toward 'old maids', threatening to 'beat' him with the twigs that he keeps throwing in her face, and whilst she is determined to stress to him that she has no prejudice against these women, she is also willing to let the argument lie if he also sees fit to do so.¹²⁷ The informality of this letter shows Belfour opening up to Richardson; she offers him candid and insightful information about her and her family, and even though *Clarissa* is ever present in each one of the letters and, largely, is only ever what this early correspondence is about, there are moments of

¹²⁵ Barbauld, IV, 267. The letter is undated by Barbauld but is sandwiched between a letter from Belfour to Richardson dated 'October 29th, 1749', and an undated reply from Richardson (this undated reply by Richardson is followed by a letter from Belfour dated 'Dec. 16th, 1749'). Eaves and Kimpel offer an approximate date for this letter as '[Early Nov.?', but concur that it is undated (for further information see Eaves and Kimpel, p. 648).

¹²⁶ Barbauld, IV, 269-270. Barbauld, IV, 269.

¹²⁷ Barbauld, IV, 270.

trust and tenderness that form the basis for what will become a enduring friendship.¹²⁸

The next *mêlée* that Richardson and Belfour enter into is over the public representation of young people, with Belfour disagreeing with Richardson's naïve ideas, but it is an argument too many for Belfour as they have discussed it before and Richardson 'sometimes stretch[es] my meaning, till you tear it in pieces'.¹²⁹ As the letter progresses Belfour tells Richardson that she has reflected upon her life, and if she were given the choice to live it again she would decline the offer, feeling happy to 'advance than retire'.¹³⁰ Belfour realises that her time undercover is coming to a close, and that she has promised to reveal herself, but she hopes that Richardson will indulge her 'for a little longer time.'¹³¹ The discussion turns to Henry Fielding's novel *Tom Jones*, and Belfour says exactly what Richardson would have wanted to hear: she is 'fatigued with the name', because she has recently spent some time with a group of 'young ladies, who had each a Tom Jones in some part of the world'.¹³² From Belfour's description it would appear that both 'Tom Jones and Sophia Western' had become terms for anything rather than simply the name of a character in a novel, and if something displayed the similar character traits to Fielding's hero and heroine then it would be referred to as a 'Tom Jones or Sophia'. The example that Belfour gives is of a friend of hers

¹²⁸ Belfour praises her mother, but claims that her father 'made himself indifferent to me by cool and awful behaviour' perhaps as a result of her 'lively' demeanour, and that he was a 'a man more to be feared than loved' (Barbauld, IV, 272-274). Upon his death she inherited 'a considerable fortune', rendering her neither excessively rich nor pathetically poor, but enough for her, at the time, to consider it 'a very pretty ornament', and Belfour found herself having 'a childish desire of making a shew' with it (Barbauld, IV, 273). She thanks her correspondent for his 'forbearance of me in relation to my free confessions concerning him [her father]', and admits to Richardson that she considers herself to be 'a "better woman than I was a girl"' (Barbauld, IV, 274). Later in the letter we learn that Belfour is one of three girls, and that she was 'the worst', with her wayward behaviour and the frivolous spending of her inherited wealth, and while there is no evidence of louche or inappropriate sexual behaviour, she had few scruples about keeping her lover waiting for nine years while deciding if it was him she wanted (Barbauld, IV, 279). This is, perhaps, an apposite moment to consider the likeness of Belfour's chosen pseudonym and the character Belford in *Clarissa*. Even though Belford is Lovelace's friend, confidante and fellow rake, his character reforms as the novel moves on, which is what Belfour implies has happened to her as her life has progressed.

¹²⁹ Barbauld, IV, 275. Richardson's notion is that young men will politely escort young ladies to church, but Belfour points out that while they may be dutifully following them there 'the lusts of their eye will be too strong for the weak efforts of the heart', and while on the subject of the sexes Belfour adds that while girls are generally thought of as the sex that can attract trouble, 'there is a certainty of boys giving at least an equal share of torment': there is little doubt that she is referring to Lovelace (Barbauld, IV, 275-277).

¹³⁰ Barbauld, IV, 278.

¹³¹ Barbauld, IV, 279.

¹³² Barbauld, IV, 280-281. Fielding's novel was published in February 1749.

who wanted to 'shew me his Sophia, the sweetest creature in the world, and immediately produced a Dutch mastiff puppy.'¹³³ Ironically, Belfour is criticising this behaviour when she treats Clarissa Harlowe as if she were a living person and best friend. The absurdity of this situation, and Belfour proving to be an ally against Fielding, would have delighted Richardson beyond all recognition. Once Belfour has delivered this story she informs Richardson that her letter had been written in two parts, some two weeks apart and she is only now returning to it.¹³⁴ The remainder of the letter is only half a page long, but she adds a postscript informing Richardson that there will be changes to their postal arrangement:

Before I write to you again, Sir, I shall have a friend in town, whom I dare trust with my letters to you, which for the future you will receive by the penny post. Please to send me your own particular direction, and I need not give Mr. Rivington any farther trouble, for some time at least, but desire yours to me may be sent as usual.¹³⁵

Belfour uses the postscript as a means of dispensing vital and more serious information to Richardson, because during the course of each letter there are copious amounts of argument, raillery and repartee which detracts from what Richardson claims he really wants: a face to the pseudonym.¹³⁶ However, he is patient with her and obliges her every whim, which we shall see played out to its fullest as the Belfour correspondence draws closer to its end. There is a definite air of enjoyment from Richardson, and he evidently delights in having such a follower, as the lengths that he is prepared to go to in order to keep her are, frankly, desperate.¹³⁷ Why would a man of his reputation and standing tolerate such trouble and agitation if he were not seeking fame and adoration? Before ending her postscript, Belfour asks something more of Richardson: to explain to her his understanding of the word '*sentimental*'.¹³⁸ Belfour is confused by it

¹³³ Barbauld, IV, 281.

¹³⁴ Belfour does not provide a separate date for the resumption of this letter, it simply carries on, and the reason she gives for the interruption is that a second group of acquaintances joined the already established party at her house, throwing her usual routine into disarray.

¹³⁵ Barbauld, IV, 282.

¹³⁶ The postscript is used as a means of tidying up their administrative house-keeping.

¹³⁷ In the next letter (Barbauld, IV, 284-294), Richardson is prepared to enter into the public sphere – something he tells her he has been unable to do for sometime – to see her, and even though he is prepared to do this for her, and he asks her if she would be prepared reveal her identity to him, he also tells her that if she would rather not then he 'will acquiesce' (Barbauld, IV, 288).

¹³⁸ Barbauld, IV, 282.

because she is hearing it everywhere, and when she asks people to explain it to her the answer she is generally given is that ‘it is – it is – *sentimental*.’¹³⁹ Belfour requires additional explanation, for her there must be further meaning, and she attest that I ‘am convinced a wrong interpretation is given, because it is impossible every thing clever and agreeable can be so common as this word’.¹⁴⁰ Belfour is astonished at hearing that such a thing as ‘a *sentimental* man’ exists, or that there is such a thing as ‘a *sentimental* party’ or ‘a *sentimental* walk’, so she looks to Richardson for his ‘interpretation of it.’¹⁴¹

Richardson replies to Belfour in another undated letter, and it opens with a short reference to Richardson’s health before moving on to the ‘Scotish friend’s plan’ and Richardson’s decision to turn down his offer; he has decided that if he was prepared to spend time working on this then he would be better off working on a plan of his own that he has been considering for some time: ‘to draw a good man’.¹⁴² Richardson’s hope is that ‘when the world is ready to receive writings of a different cast [...] writers will never be wanting to amuse, as well as to instruct’, and he feels that this time is fast approaching.¹⁴³ This argument leads him to Henry Fielding who, Richardson claims, will always write if an audience will always receive, and he asks Belfour if she has ‘ever seen a list of his performances?’¹⁴⁴ Richardson attests that Fielding never moves literature on, that ‘Nothing but a shorter life than I wish him, can hinder him from writing himself out of date.’¹⁴⁵ Richardson considers Fielding, unlike himself, to be a ‘fashionable author’, the implication being that even though he will continue to write, Fielding’s longevity is in question, as fashion changes and the public moves on to something different. For Richardson, Fielding does not have the ability to invent something new that will assure him of prominence.¹⁴⁶ The argument between

¹³⁹ Barbauld, IV, 283.

¹⁴⁰ Barbauld, IV, 283.

¹⁴¹ Barbauld, IV, 283.

¹⁴² Eaves and Kimpel offer an approximate date as ‘[Late Nov.?]’ 1749 (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 648). Barbauld, IV, 284-285. Richardson had previously (the end of October 1749) been approached by ‘a Scotch gentleman’ (Barbauld, IV, 258-259) – probably L. M. Stretch with *The Beauties of History; or pictures of virtue and vice, drawn from real life; designed for the Instruction and Entertainment of Youth*, which was eventually published without Richardson’s help in 1777 – and Belfour had warned him that his writing was required elsewhere; on this occasion it appears that he had listened to her.

¹⁴³ Barbauld, IV, 285.

¹⁴⁴ Barbauld, IV, 286.

¹⁴⁵ Barbauld, IV, 286.

¹⁴⁶ Barbauld, IV, 286.

Richardson and Fielding is simple, but neither is willing to relent on the subject. Both men have strong and unremitting ideas about the nature of the realist novel with Richardson interested in didacticism and weightiness, while Fielding uses a heightened, direct and often humorous sense of realism in his exploration of serious social issues. Both authors engage a picaresque structure, but while Fielding directly involves his reader in the action as if they were themselves a character, Richardson asks his audience to be exactly that and watch from the sidelines while fully engaging with the characters he has drawn as if they were connected to them. Belfour ably does as she is asked. A favourite literary device of Fielding's is the aside, which catapults his novel into the realm of memoir as the reader imagines him to be documenting events from his own life.¹⁴⁷ Ian Watt expands upon this idea in his work *The Rise of the Novel* where he argues that 'Fielding's stylistic virtues tend to interfere with his technique as a novelist' and that due to this 'a patent selectiveness of vision destroys our belief in the reality of report, or at least diverts our attention from the content of the report to the skill of the reporter.'¹⁴⁸ For Richardson this literary trickery is anathema and immediately devalues the authenticity of his chosen genre.

Richardson leaves the Fielding debate at this point and closes in on Belfour's reference to 'a lady who obstinately refused her lover for nine years', and he does not refrain from speaking his mind.¹⁴⁹ Richardson is curious as to why this man deserved such treatment, and suggests that the lady in question considered him 'Not agreeable [...] not bold enough [...] that] the lady had more towering views, or a preference to some other man', he suggests that when 'she found her hopes frustrated, contented herself to take up with the man she had for so long a time despised.'¹⁵⁰ Whether or not Richardson had fathomed that the lady in question was Belfour, and he was simply being deliberately provocative is hard to determine, but provocation it is as far as Belfour is concerned, and in the next letter we see her raging back at him. The letter moves away from Belfour and onto Richardson's ailments, and informs Belfour that, quite some time ago, he had to

¹⁴⁷ Later, Henry James would be critical of "'accomplished novelists' [who] concede 'in a digression, a parenthesis or an aside' that their fiction is 'only make-believe'" (see Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (California: University of California Press, 2000), p. 286.

¹⁴⁸ Ian Watt, p. 30.

¹⁴⁹ Barbault, IV, 286.

¹⁵⁰ Barbault, IV, 287.

abandon going to church because his 'nervous malady, [which] will not let me appear in a crowd of people.'¹⁵¹ He furthers this point by saying that he has 'forborn going to public diversions, and even been forced to deny myself [...] opportunities which I had at pleasure'.¹⁵² From these testimonials by Richardson it would be fair to say that he was either a clinical agoraphobic, or that he had sold himself into the idea of his own celebrity which had rendered him so famous that he was preyed upon wherever he went, the result being that his nervous ailments had increased so that he thus experienced a negative aspect of fame.¹⁵³ However, in the next few lines Richardson tells Belfour that he is prepared to change his hermetic lifestyle and venture into public in order to see her, suggesting that his seclusion had been chosen rather than forced upon him.

Again Richardson issues an invitation to Belfour in the hope that she will visit him at North End, and he assures her that her identity will be kept from anyone that she meets there telling her that she will be referred to as 'only the sister, the cousin, the niece, the what you please, of my incognita, and I will never address you as other, than as what you chuse to pass for.'¹⁵⁴ Richardson is prepared to go out of his way to accommodate his number one fan. The letter moves on to religion, in particular Richardson's piety and the 'air of severity' in his 'church countenance', but he refuses to accept this and informs Belfour that he is neither 'severe or forbidding', reassuring her that she has no reason to be afraid.¹⁵⁵ Richardson's ego lets him down when he contradicts his earlier statement about being unable to go out in public, by telling Belfour that 'I go thro' the Park once or twice a week', and he regularly walks 'from Salisbury Court to North End'.¹⁵⁶ In this same statement he offers her a detailed description of himself and his behaviour so that she will be able to recognise him were they to be at the park at the same time as one another.¹⁵⁷ Richardson moves on to Belfour's story of her 'Magdalen' and, in a twist to the usual gift-giving process, swaps a story of his

¹⁵¹ Barbauld, IV, 288.

¹⁵² Barbauld, IV, 288.

¹⁵³ There are two other possible diagnoses for Richardson's volunteered withdrawal from society: sociophobia (the fear of society, or people generally) or anthropophobia (the fear of people).

¹⁵⁴ Barbauld, IV, 288-289.

¹⁵⁵ Barbauld, IV, 289-290.

¹⁵⁶ Barbauld, IV, 290. Eaves and Kimpel, p. 526.

¹⁵⁷ Richardson's description of himself can be found in Barbauld, IV, 290-292.

own.¹⁵⁸ The idea of trading stories as gifts either serves to enhance or prove knowledge, to entertain, or to enter into a game of one-upmanship. As the letter draws to a close, Richardson addresses her previous intention to tell him, if he desires it, about where she was intending to deceive him, but Richardson is dissatisfied with her answer, because ‘It is, indeed, such a one as a lady would make to a man whom she had entirely in her power, and who knew not how to help himself’, the implication being that Richardson is not that man.¹⁵⁹ Yet, as we have seen and will continue to see, he is very eager to maintain their relationship at whatever cost.

Belfour replies to Richardson’s letter on 16 December 1749, and immediately attacks him for flirting with the idea of producing another novel, but then not providing her with a concrete answer.¹⁶⁰ Richardson had, however, hinted at the main subject for a possible novel, and Belfour affirms that ‘we want’ a character such as this, that Richardson could do so much good with it and that she, perhaps most importantly for Belfour – not forgetting Richardson whose ego would have been flattered by it – would be able to ‘bargain, that I was instrumental in persuading you to it.’¹⁶¹ As with other fans of his, for example Thomas Edwards, Belfour is hoping to bask in the glory of Richardson’s fame, and he does nothing to stop it. She moves on to Fielding’s *Tom Jones* by first attacking its heroine Sophia, stating that she is ‘so very trifling and insipid, that I never heard a dispute about it’, the implication being that Fielding’s character is not considered worthy of debate or even gossip.¹⁶² However, Belfour also attests that *Tom Jones* is very popular among the female audience, and that she has had many a lively debate over him. The letter moves on to defend ‘the lady, Sir, who so obstinately and long refused her lover, and married him at last’, refuting every claim that Richardson had made about her, stating that she is ‘acquainted with the lady’s mind’ and knows that ‘she never would have married a man she ever had

¹⁵⁸ Barbauld, IV, 293. The story tells of a man who ran away with his wife’s sister, but the ‘unhappy delinquent died in his hands’ and her coffin was filled with ‘unslaked lime’ so as to ‘destroy her features and flesh’ in order to prevent revealing her identity if the coffin was ever to have been opened (Barbauld, IV, 293). Richardson makes the point that there are worse villains than his Lovelace.

¹⁵⁹ Barbauld, IV, 293-294.

¹⁶⁰ Barbauld, IV, 294.

¹⁶¹ Barbauld, IV, 295.

¹⁶² Barbauld, IV, 295.

despised.’¹⁶³ Belfour explains that the lady was young and ‘giddy’ when the gentleman first proposed and that she was unable, at the time, to ‘fix her thoughts upon any one man above two days together’, that she was intent on travelling the world ‘in order to gain some knowledge of how to behave in it’, and held the ‘romantic notion of trying a man’s constancy.’¹⁶⁴ However, she has since heard that the gentleman in question considers himself to be rewarded for his patience, and the lady is delighted when she hears this. Belfour apportions blame to Richardson for encouraging her in their correspondence, and she is determined to make it clear to him that her recent appointment as his ‘adopted daughter’ means that she has subsequently developed a new-found vanity, the consequences of which he is going to have to manage.¹⁶⁵ Belfour thanks Richardson for his ‘repeated and very kind invitation’, and wishes that she could accept, but cannot because ‘the thoughts of taking so long a journey are over for this winter’.¹⁶⁶ At this point she begins telling him of a friend who will, on her behalf, seek him out by the description he has given of himself. It would be opportune to consider that Belfour may be lying here, but because she has chosen to be two people, arguably, we should surmise that she is not, and to all intents and purposes, she has ‘sent your description to my friend’: herself as Lady Bradshaigh.¹⁶⁷ Either way, within two months she will be exposed as Lady Bradshaigh of Haigh House in Lancashire. Belfour’s mistake lies in the laborious building of a story about the supposed friend and her pursuit of Richardson, and while the events might be, whether in full or in part, true, it eventually enrages Richardson.¹⁶⁸ Over the next two pages Belfour recollects the scene of her mother’s death, which she likens to ‘the sweet manner [of] your Clarissa’, and reports on the auspicious circumstances surrounding it.¹⁶⁹ The letter, as a whole, moves in and out of levels of tedium, and the next significant moment develops when Richardson appears to have asked Belfour for access to her diary, and with mock-outrage she reprimands him: ‘Lord

¹⁶³ Barbauld, IV, 296.

¹⁶⁴ Barbauld, IV, 296-297.

¹⁶⁵ Barbauld, IV, 297.

¹⁶⁶ Barbauld, IV, 298.

¹⁶⁷ Barbauld, IV, 298.

¹⁶⁸ Belfour takes up almost three pages when constructing her convoluted story (Barbauld, IV, 298-301).

¹⁶⁹ Barbauld, IV, 302. According to Belfour she and her two sisters were, by chance, all present at the death of her mother; a strange coincidence as all three of them live some distance away from each other and rarely manage to co-ordinate a family reunion. Again Belfour mentions her ‘awful father’ (Barbauld, IV, 302).

bless you, Sir! You would then know all my secrets. There you would find your incognita, and all belonging to her.’¹⁷⁰ Belfour is adamant that Richardson will not see her diary, and she dispenses with this request in just five and a half lines. The term ‘incognita’ appears from, and is enjoyed by, both sides throughout their early correspondence and, as a masquerade expression, it suggests flirtation and salaciousness. Its useful presence ensures that Belfour can remain even more of a mystery, and it permits both of them to dance alongside the fringes of the inappropriate without ever crossing over. Belfour further teases Richardson by tantalising him with the suggestion of secrets, and coquettishly implies that by affording him access to her most intimate information she would be exposing herself fully; Belfour wants to maintain her anonymity for a while longer, and understands that by doing so she can prolong his interest. However, there is a dual problem here for Belfour as she has two possible losses to consider: the loss of her assumed identity – which is the one that Richardson is most fascinated by – and the possible loss of him as a result of her unmasking. This suspended loss is described by Chris Cullens in her essay ‘Mrs. Robinson and the Masquerade of Womanliness’ where, amongst other things, she includes the idea of the ‘phantasmatic’, ‘the real’, and the repercussions and inevitability of the reveal:

Caught in the double bind endemic to the “masquerade of womanliness,” she [Mary Robinson] paid for her unmasking by being nominally reassigned another demanding cultural role of embodiment. For flaunting the rift between the phantasmatic construction of desirable femininity she incarnated repeatedly as an actress and the “real” or “sexual factic” of an apparently irrepressible female sexuality, “the lost one” ended up functioning as a publicly identified sign of lost womanhood.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Barbauld, IV, 303. Given Richardson’s predilection for propriety and politeness, coupled with his repeated claims of bashfulness, the idea that he would ever ask a woman for access to such an intimate item is surprising in itself, but to ask such a favour of a woman he is yet to meet is even more incongruous and alarming.

¹⁷¹ Chris Cullens, ‘Mrs. Robinson and the Masquerade of Womanliness’, *Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Veronica Kelly and Dorothea E. von Mücke (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 266-289 (p.267). Cullens is examining Mary Robinson’s work *Walsingham, Or the Pupil of Nature* (1796), a novel which weaves ideas of transvestism, with love and family loyalty – its protagonist is raised as a man (Sir Sidney Aubrey) by his mother in an attempt to secure the family estate, but falls in love with the relative (Walsingham) who has been duped out of his rightful inheritance. Toward the end of the novel, when Aubrey’s life is at stake, he is unmasked as a woman, and she and Walsingham fall in love – and her argument centres around the concept of building up a certain impression of oneself, only to have to inevitably acquiesce to reality.

Even though Cullens's subject (Robinson) and Belfour are, for the most part, polar opposites, a parallel can be made to their shared interest in, and use of, the alternative identity. Cullens suggests that Robinson had become embroiled in the multiple personality culture that existed around her in the theatre, and therefore had little choice but to be bound up in the layering of it, propounded by public expectation. As a result of this, her true self became buried beneath the layers, overlooked by all. Belfour understands that she has to play her game effectively, and by refusing Richardson access to her diary she hopes to avert the premature loss of her assumed identity, as well as the possible loss of her new best friend should he become bored of her as her real self. Even though Belfour is not as deeply saturated by these 'demanding cultural role[s] of embodiment' as Robinson, she is wise to consider the possibility of her real self as a less appealing pen-friend.¹⁷²

In an interesting juxtaposition the discussion moves to religion and the behaviour often imbued by those who worship, and Belfour once again attempts to flatter Richardson with uses for his *Clarissa*.¹⁷³ Again, her point is that she uses the novel to instruct her, and this time claims that when she finds herself surrounded by young people she rates them on whether or not they have read the novel, and then on what they think of it. Belfour is critical of the youths that pride themselves on 'uncertain enjoyments, wherein consists their whole satisfaction', and enjoys 'throw[ing] in a fashionable obstacle' to make them question 'their happiness': this obstacle is *Clarissa*, and their response to it depends on whether she grades them as 'incurable' or 'hopeful'.¹⁷⁴ As the letter progresses, apart from one reference to *Pamela* (which, upon Richardson's guidance, she has been re-reading), and the mention of an anecdote that promises to make Richardson smile,

¹⁷² Cullens, p. 267.

¹⁷³ Belfour suggests that a lot of people who worship also deem it necessary to adopt a demeanour of 'solemnity, and even moroseness', and she finds this confusing, suggesting that a guiltless mind should surely 'shew itself in an easy, happy, and pleasing deportment' (Barbauld, IV, 303).

¹⁷⁴ Barbauld, IV, 303-304. Belfour's example is of a young male acquaintance that had disappointed her by reneging on an engagement that they had made. However, upon reporting that he had been intoxicated by the "'history of the divine Clarissa, of which he was fond, and received so much instruction from'" and therefore was unable to attend her, he was given 'full absolution' (Barbauld, IV, 305). Belfour offers another example of the effect that Richardson's *Clarissa* was having on all stations within a household, by telling the tale of a maid who was moved to tears whilst dressing her mistress's hair, who had been reading a passage from the novel to some of her friends. The maid had been asked to explain her distress, and upon answering that it was due to Clarissa's suffering despite her 'goodness and innocence', she was given 'a crown for that answer' (Barbauld, IV, 305).

Belfour spends most of her time replying to Richardson's previous points, and by and large continually relates them back to *Clarissa*.¹⁷⁵ As Belfour begins to close her letter, she divulges a little more personal information which we can connect to *Clarissa* and an earlier argument about the consequences of having children: Belfour and her partner are childless, but even though this was not necessarily a choice, they 'are both content, and without anxiety on that account.'¹⁷⁶ Toward the end of the letter, Belfour promises Richardson that she will no longer try 'persuading you to read Tom Jones, and beg[s] pardon for having done it', but she is aware that Richardson seems angry with her and tells him that if he had read Fielding's novel then they would be able to discuss its attributes, of which there are a few, as well as its non-attributes, of which there are 'many more.'¹⁷⁷ In an attempt to further her allegiance with Richardson she has decided that from what she knows, 'Mr. Fielding's private character makes him to me appear disagreeable', and she wants Richardson to know that 'I am in no way prejudiced in his favour, I only impartially speak my opinion.'¹⁷⁸ Then, as if she feels that she has undermined herself – or perhaps she has simply realised that she is losing patience with Richardson's invidious obsession with Henry Fielding – she abruptly tells him that she has no intention of 'pointing out [for him] the moralities which I think may be found in this work', because if he cannot be bothered to read it himself then she cannot be bothered to invest time in researching it for him.¹⁷⁹ The final point that Belfour makes concerns itself with the sexes, and the fact that whilst she may appear to prefer men to women, she does not, and considers men to be 'worse, worse, a thousand times!'¹⁸⁰

Richardson's ten page reply comes on 9 January 1749-50, and opens with exclamations of apparent condescension. Richardson finds Belfour's aforementioned request for him to begin writing again as patronizing, and goes about explaining to her the complexities of writing such a character as 'the better

¹⁷⁵ Belfour discusses *Clarissa* in relation to her own ideas about death and the possibility of living her life over again (Barbauld, IV, 306), and *Clarissa* is referred to again when Belfour is examining her own faults despite the praise that Richardson bestows upon her (Barbauld, IV, 307).

¹⁷⁶ Barbauld, IV, 309. In a previous letter (see Barbauld, IV, 223) Richardson had asked Belfour to imagine the sort of grown up children that would have been the product of a union between *Clarissa* and *Lovelace*.

¹⁷⁷ Barbauld, IV, 309-310.

¹⁷⁸ Barbauld, IV, 310.

¹⁷⁹ Barbauld, IV, 310. Richardson had also asked Aaron Hill's daughters to read *Tom Jones* for him, and report back, as he could not get past the first chapter.

¹⁸⁰ Barbauld, IV, 311.

half of the world [...] I mean the women, would not like'.¹⁸¹ Richardson is concerned, after the reception that the character of Mr. Hickman in *Clarissa* had received, and 'after such kindness shewn to that of Lovelace----'. He stops abruptly at this point, and refuses to say more, choosing to keep the discussion for the time when he will meet Belfour's 'lady [who] seems to be greatly in your secrets, insomuch that there is *but one heart between you*'.¹⁸² Richardson is aware that Belfour and 'the lady' are the same person, but graciously plays along with the pretence until Belfour is ready to divulge herself. The letter briefly moves to Fielding and his works, with Richardson admitting to having 'seen at least twenty of them', but relishing in the fact that none of them were considered particularly important until 'Joseph Andrews' came along, which Richardson claims to have given to Fielding.¹⁸³ Richardson has also made a connection between Belfour and 'the lady who so obstinately, as you say, refused her lover, and afterwards married him', preferring to suggest that she is perhaps 'a *sister*, at least, to my incognita.'¹⁸⁴ Richardson, in gentlemanly fashion, plays a patient and polite chess-like game with Belfour by gently and gradually seeping information to her about his understanding of the game that they are playing, and by doing this shows her that he is prepared to wait until she is ready to reveal herself. Much of this letter is spent moving his metaphorical pieces around the chessboard in an attempt to coax her into a position of no return, and while that does not happen immediately, his patience will soon pay off and Belfour will find herself in an impossibly difficult situation. Even though Richardson is operating within the boundaries of set codes of conduct he, nonetheless, sets Belfour up for a fall by steadily breaking down the boundaries - such as the creation of one or, as she would have us believe, more incognitos - that she has set up for herself. Most of the content of this letter is banal as Richardson creeps around answering points laid down in Belfour's previous letter, and waiting patiently for her to give herself away. He tries to provoke Belfour into a confession, and when further discussing 'the lady who so obstinately, as you say, refused her lover, and afterwards married him' he accuses

¹⁸¹ Barbauld, IV, 312.

¹⁸² Barbauld, IV, 312.

¹⁸³ Barbauld, IV, 312. *Joseph Andrews* (published in 1742) sees the coming together of the mock-heroic and neo-classical forms that were being used in the early to mid-eighteenth century. The novel was Fielding's first venture into full length prose fiction, and continued on from his earlier satirical pamphlet, *Shamela* (1741), a parody of Richardson's *Pamela*.

¹⁸⁴ Barbauld, IV, 313.

her of having ‘a love of power’ which she shows a ‘tyrannous abuse of’.¹⁸⁵ Richardson does not stop there and tells Belfour that he would have preferred it if she could have given him full excuses rather than ‘half-excuses’ for this lady’s conduct and, even though he loves ‘the sex’, at times he wishes ‘that their principals should be justified by their actions, especially when they have time to deliberate.’¹⁸⁶ Even though Richardson probably believed what he was saying, there is every chance that he was also being deliberately provocative; the high risk strategy, of forthright and critical opinion, employed by Richardson could have backfired and easily ostracized his correspondent, but instead his number one fan continued to correspond with him.

After taking just a four and a half line diversion, Richardson finds himself returning to Belfour’s mischievous story-telling in order to provoke her once again, and in the next six and a half pages – the remainder of the letter – Richardson sets about challenging Belfour, and her mysterious friend, about their deceitful and inconsistent behaviour.¹⁸⁷ Richardson’s does not hold back, and it seems as if the letter is one of two halves. The first part of the letter is concerned with epistolary house-keeping, a place where he answers all of Belfour’s questions, making sure to engage in all the right places, with all the right levels of compliance and resistance; but in the second half of the letter Richardson delivers a bombshell. For all intents and purposes he is issuing a warning, and he makes it clear to her that while the game they are playing is acceptable for now, there are boundaries that she, and her friend, are getting very close to, but should not be crossed.

Belfour replies in a letter dated 28 January 1749-1750, and immediately reprimands him for sending her such a short letter (she greeted his ‘four pages and a half, with a Pish-pugh! is this all?’); she used to be content with a short note but as their relationship has developed she has become accustomed to receiving longer ones, and she tells him that this is ‘what your indulgence has taught me to expect!’¹⁸⁸ Belfour does not sound angry or frightened by Richardson’s last letter,

¹⁸⁵ Barbauld, IV, 312-314.

¹⁸⁶ Barbauld, IV, 314.

¹⁸⁷ The diversion is concerned with the dating of the letter, and Richardson acknowledges that the date of Belfour’s last letter was the 16 December (1749) but claims that he did not receive it until the 30 December (Barbauld, IV, 315). For the remainder of the letter refer to Barbauld, IV, 315-321.

¹⁸⁸ Barbauld, IV, 322.

if anything she appears to have risen to the challenge of annoying him further, and follows his lead by using the first half of her letter as a way of dealing with the contents of his previous letter before moving on to things that interest her.¹⁸⁹ During this early part of the letter Belfour persists in trying to find reasons for remaining incognito, and this time it is because Richardson has not given her sufficient enough reason for complete divulgence, preferring to think of her as 'ungenerous'.¹⁹⁰ She replies to his apparent distaste of 'the lady [...] who so obstinately refused her lover, &c.' by explaining herself again, telling him that he is wrong in his assertion that it was 'a designed trouble' instigated by the lady, and she then somewhat haughtily and disdainfully asks him if he would 'have a woman marry, before she likes one man better than another.'¹⁹¹ Eventually the letter moves on and Belfour castigates Richardson for his double standards in respect of her secret which, she claims, he has continually said should only be divulged when she is ready. She is still nervous of meeting him, largely because of the content of her letters which she feels expose her 'weakness and presumption', and she tells Richardson that she has 'so terrified myself with the thoughts of it, that, at this moment, I tremble, supposing myself before you.'¹⁹²

It is at this point in the Belfour-Richardson correspondence that the reader experiences a shift in their relationship; not only are we aware that Belfour is in London and frequenting Richardson's neighbourhood, but she is inching closer toward acquiescing to Richardson's charm. She considers that it is time to make a confession, albeit it only half a confession, by telling Richardson that because he has 'declared, that we [Belfour and her lady friend] seem to have but one heart' she will 'from henceforward, speak of me and my friend as one and the same person, and you may suppose that person my identical self; only *suppose*, I say.'¹⁹³ Belfour almost fully confesses to there being no mystery friend, but is not quite ready to wholly admit to her fabrication, preferring instead to explain why she cannot 'come plump upon you with a full face (broad too by nature), and

¹⁸⁹ Eaves and Kimpel have no other listed between this letter and Richardson's previous one.

¹⁹⁰ Barbauld, IV, 322.

¹⁹¹ Barbauld, IV, 323. Belfour's defence continues for a further two and a half pages and makes the point that despite Richardson's idea that the lady 'trifl[ed] away those years before she yielded her hand', she did not, claiming that she felt 'unfit' and unready to be such a wife as was required, and that it was the gentleman who persisted in proposing (Barbauld, IV, 323-326).

¹⁹² Barbauld, IV, 326.

¹⁹³ Barbauld, IV, 326.

begin talking' because this would be impudent and she feels that she needs to 'steal into your acquaintance, if ever I am so fortunate as to obtain it.'¹⁹⁴ Even though Belfour recognises the importance of social etiquette, and is obviously intensifying her knowledge of what is important to Richardson, her point is reasonably justifiable, but she is trying a little too hard to find reasons not to reveal herself. Belfour reminds Richardson that he had told her that he refrained from appearing in public, so she never considered him to have 'haunts' and 'knew not where to look for you', but maintains that she did go to the park on warm days and on one occasion 'fancied I met you', and after the initial shock decided that, due to his dress, it was not him.¹⁹⁵ At this point the letter becomes more interesting as Belfour begins to suggest that she may have seen him, and that he would never know if she had or not; she teases Richardson a little more by asking: 'How came I to know, that you have a mole upon your left cheek?', before telling him that she had seen his portrait 'at Mr. Highmore's, where I design making you another visit shortly.'¹⁹⁶ Belfour's attempt at luring Richardson further into her teasing has backfired, and without realising it she has exposed her lie by revealing that she is in London even though she has maintained that she has no intention of visiting there until the winter is over, and even though Belfour had told Richardson to 'suppose [...] only *suppose*' that she and her friend are as one, there can now be no doubt that they are one and the same person.¹⁹⁷ So, Richardson now knows that Belfour is in London, and that she has visited his friend Joseph Highmore, and intends to visit him again soon. Belfour offers more information to Richardson by telling him that even though she is grateful that he supplied her with information about the 'many places where you visit', she is unacquainted with the women he refers to, but she has paid a 'little short visit' to Mr. Millar which rendered her racked with 'fear of being detected in the fact I there committed' and ran 'out of the shop [...] waded across the street up to my ancles in dirt [...] to my party, who were waiting for me in an adjacent street'.¹⁹⁸ She also reports upon a trip to 'Mr. Rivengton's' [sic] who, upon her asking first

¹⁹⁴ Barbauld, IV, 327.

¹⁹⁵ Barbauld, IV, 327.

¹⁹⁶ Barbauld, IV, 328.

¹⁹⁷ Barbauld, IV, 326.

¹⁹⁸ Barbauld, IV, 328-329. Belfour had attended Millar's shop in order to deliver a package for Richardson, which she hid under a piece of paper that she found 'lying upon the counter' (Barbauld, IV, 329).

for ‘the Contents to Clarissa’ and ‘Then for a prayer-book’, neither of which he had, ‘seemed very short in his answers. Oh! thought I, friend, if you knew me, perhaps you would ask me to sit down.’¹⁹⁹ Belfour is evidently enjoying her new clandestine lifestyle, but her ego is getting the better of her, and it is only a matter of time before her complacency and affected self-assurance has catastrophic results for her plan. The remainder of the letter, once again, sees Belfour defending herself against the accusations brought upon her in Richardson’s last letter. This time we see Belfour adopting a provocative device, borrowed from Richardson, as she sarcastically whispers in his ear, just as he had whispered in hers earlier, that his reference to ‘my friend’s time (meaning mine) being “taken up in the pursuit of pleasures”’ is ridiculous given that the length of her letters to him clearly prove that she would rather spend time cultivating a strong correspondence with him, than in others.²⁰⁰ As the letter draws to a close Belfour is keen to let Richardson know that ‘if I trespass too much, or break in upon your time [...] you will freely tell me so; and I [...] shall not take it [...] amiss, but as a favour’, and if he deems it appropriate to terminate their correspondence at any time, she will ‘consent without complaint, tho’ with regret.’²⁰¹ The letter has a note added to the end of it which tells Richardson that Belfour, on the next fine Saturday, will ‘look out for you in the Park’, and that as he is ‘desirous of finding a nearer way of conveyance’ he should address his next correspondence ‘direct only to C.L. and enclose it to Miss J. to be left at Mrs. G’s, &c. &c.’, she assures him that the lady does not know who her famous correspondent is.²⁰²

Dated 2 February 1749-50, Richardson’s next letter opens with a comparison between Belfour and Lovelace:

What pains does my unkind correspondent take to conceal herself! Lovelace thought himself at liberty to change names without act of parliament. I wish, Madam, that Lovelace – “A sad dog!” said a certain lady once, “why was he made so wicked, yet so agreeable?”²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Barbauld, IV, 329.

²⁰⁰ Barbauld, IV, 330-332.

²⁰¹ Barbauld, IV, 332.

²⁰² Barbauld, IV, 333.

²⁰³ Barbauld, IV, 333. Eaves and Kimpel note that ‘B dates 3 Feb., but reference to tomorrow’s being fine shows letter was written on Friday – undoubtedly the Friday letter referred to in his [5 Feb.]’ (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 649). Eaves and Kimpel imply that Barbauld’s dating of this, and the next few letters, is wrong and if we are to rely on the contents of them, then their dating is correct. However, this does not detract from the narrative that unfolds over the course of these days (2

The reference that Richardson makes to Belfour's attempts at concealment, alongside his allusion to both of the characters' changes of name, illustrates that Richardson has identified similarities between them, and he, albeit jocosely, wishes to make this clear to Belfour.²⁰⁴ Richardson moves on to tell Belfour that although he had adhered to her wishes and had sent his last letter to the address that she suggested, along with a note and the gift of a 'little book I sent on Thursday night', not only had they all been refused by a porter there, but Richardson claims never to have 'seen or heard of [the porter], nor of the book' again.²⁰⁵ However, this did not deter Richardson and, as planned, he went to the park the following Saturday in the hope of seeing her. Richardson tells the story of his time in the park, claiming that he had thoughts that perhaps 'she will be carried in a chair to the Park, to make amends, and there reveal herself'; again he went away disappointed.²⁰⁶ Richardson is going to great lengths to keep his fan, and informs Belfour that even though he left the park he again walked up and down the Mall in the hope of seeing her. Richardson's willingness to work hard to retain his anonymous fan suggests a possible weakness in his own self-worth as a literary celebrity, and he recognizes an opportune moment to superficially resolve the issue. He sees Belfour, particularly at this early stage in their relationship, as an important asset to his ever-increasing empire, one that allows him to boast and offer him an alternative accessory to the wigs and costumes adorned by so many others; it reinforces his kudos. Richardson can be talked about, and cooed over by his other acquaintances, and by having an articulate, passionate, albeit somewhat obsessive fan, he is able to consolidate his position as a popularly eminent writer. However, Belfour does not make it easy for Richardson, and he is pathetically aware that she could withdraw at a moment's notice, reputation and identity in tact. Curiously, neither party seems to have considered that this is reciprocal and a dependency on one another has developed: for her, she has ensnared a famous writer as a pen-pal who acquiesces to her demands, and for him she symbolises

February 1749/50 – 10 February 1749/50), nor does it alter any of the impact of any of the action that took place.

²⁰⁴ Belfour's interest in reforming Lovelace perhaps hints at her own recognition of similarities between him and her young self earlier in their correspondence. She explains that second chances should be given, and that the difficulties of youth should not necessarily determine the outcome of maturity (see Barbauld, IV, 243-248 and 272-274).

²⁰⁵ Barbauld, IV, 334.

²⁰⁶ Barbauld, IV, 334.

his popularity and status. If one withdraws then the other topples. At times in this letter, Richardson becomes irritated and asks himself why he is doing this at his age, which leads him to threaten Belfour with some home-truths, but he decides against it and swiftly signs off his letter as a polite 'admirer and humble servant'.²⁰⁷ Richardson makes one last attempt to coax Belfour into a meeting with him by adding in a postscript stating that the portrait of Clarissa, owned by Dr. Chauncey, had been lent to him but that it may have to be returned soon; Richardson asks Belfour if 'You will possibly chuse to send some lady or gentleman of your acquaintance to look at it.'²⁰⁸ Even though there is a tone of provocation in this proposition, it is also an opportunity for Belfour to steel herself and pay him a visit.

The next letter to appear in Barbauld's edition is from Richardson to Belfour and is dated a day after Richardson's last, on 3 February 1749-50.²⁰⁹ It seems to be replying to an earlier letter from Belfour because Richardson reiterates to her that he had already told her in his last letter that he would answer more of 'the remaining parts of the letter you favoured me with' in a while, as it was too long to answer in its entirety.²¹⁰ The incorrectly positioned (by Barbauld) letter hampers the momentum of the unfolding events, and as a result I have elected to gloss over it, providing instead a footnoted précis of its primary points.²¹¹

Barbauld's next selected letter is dated 'Feb. 7' and has no year attached to it, but due to its contents it is fair to conclude that it was written in 1749-50.²¹² Belfour is concerned about a hurried note that she had sent to Richardson which

²⁰⁷ Barbauld, IV, 336.

²⁰⁸ Barbauld, IV, 336.

²⁰⁹ Barbauld, IV, 336.

²¹⁰ Barbauld, IV, 336.

²¹¹ According to Eaves and Kimpel, this is where the confusion amongst these final Belfour letters lies; they suggest that, due to the contents of the letters, Barbauld has muddled up the dating of them and that Richardson's undelivered letter (as mentioned in his last dated February 2 1749-50) has caused the confusion. (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 649). Barbauld could have diverted all confusion by simply omitting this letter from her edition, or positioning it before his previous one, as it has little bearing on the momentum of the unfolding, and soon to be concluded, story. Granted it informs us of Richardson's reaction to Belfour's letter dated 28 January 1749-50 (he also refers to her earlier letter dated 29 October 1749), as we see him begging for her to set a date and location for their meeting, but apart from that it repeats what has already gone before it, namely his reaction to 'the lady who so obstinately, for eight or nine years, refused her hand to the gentleman she afterwards married' (Barbauld, IV, 337), his distress at her attitude with regard to her, or her 'friend', being in town and not visiting him; Richardson obviously feels that he is more committed to their relationship than she is, and suggests that she is more perhaps interested in power than in furthering their affiliation.

²¹² Eaves and Kimpel confirm this (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 649).

was intended to appease his feelings of neglect by her; so in this letter we now see her attempting to expand her earlier note and settle his fears. Belfour has had a busy time in London and even though she would rather be at home, she has been obliged to socialise. Belfour tells Richardson that despite ‘the interview you so kindly desire’, as well as ‘your obliging invitation’, she is still not ready to meet him because she is still struggling with confidence and is fearful that ‘If we were to meet, you would not see the same person you correspond with’ because she will find herself tongue-tied and frantic because she will ‘think it necessary to talk.’²¹³ Previously, Richardson had implied that Joseph Highmore had mentioned Belfour, but he had refused to expand on it and now we witness Belfour attempting to fathom out exactly what could have been said. By stating something, and then withdrawing from it, Richardson has played Belfour at her own game. However, Belfour continues to try to outfox Richardson and suggests that due to the ‘multitude’ of people that visit him, Highmore would have found it impossible to work out who she was, and that even though ‘He can indeed express thoughts very well [...] he must have the object to study, or a lively description of it.’²¹⁴ Belfour continues to play the game and considers it ‘almost a shame to give him [Highmore] any trouble’ as he is ‘the most obliging, civil man’, but alas she ‘intend[s] it very soon.’²¹⁵ At this point, perhaps somewhat prematurely for Richardson, Belfour swiftly extricates herself from the letter by saying that it is becoming too long. When reading these final letters the sense of tension and frustration is palpable as Richardson endeavours to catch her out by persuasion and detection, while Belfour circumvents her way around his attempts by side-stepping all that is thrown at her.

The next day (8 February 1749-50), a frustrated Richardson sends Belfour an acerbic five line note drawing her attention to the fact that apparently she ‘often go[es] out to oblige other people, when your inclinations and whole heart are at home! Often did you say, Madam, with deliberation say?’²¹⁶ Richardson, again, points out Belfour’s double standards and makes his annoyance, at yet another exclusion, known. It soon transpires that this note crosses over with her next letter.

²¹³ Barbauld, IV, 346-347.

²¹⁴ Barbauld, IV, 347.

²¹⁵ Barbauld, IV, 347.

²¹⁶ Barbauld, IV, 348.

Belfour's penultimate letter to Richardson is dated 9 February 1749-50 and opens with panicked alarm: 'O good god, Sir!'²¹⁷ Belfour explains that she had returned to Joseph Highmore's residence in order to peruse the *Clarissa* paintings, and that before she knew it she had renounced her anonymity and revealed herself to him. Belfour is fearful that the unintentional reveal will already have been reported to Richardson and, in a state of panic, she is writing this letter to explain herself. Belfour's primary intention is to make it clear to Richardson that 'this was not a voluntary revelation', and that she was vexed by 'an attack, from another person [Highmore], on your behalf.'²¹⁸ She is anxious that Richardson should know that she is concerned that he was not the first to see her unveiled, and this fortuitous disclosure signals the break down of their cosy, but salutary, unit. In agitated tones Belfour tries to set the scene, and tells Richardson that at the time she considered that she may have been the victim of a lurid hoax, and that somehow Richardson would suddenly appear. This fear was compounded when, on entering another room in which to compose herself, she found herself looking at a portrait of Richardson which, at first and in a state of panic, she had mistaken for the real thing. Belfour had found herself in a special place reserved for Highmore's depiction of *Clarissa* and its author. Of course, Barbauld had no choice but to include this letter as it is integral to Belfour's unveiling, but its auspicious content draws the reader closer toward being seduced into believing in Richardson's celebrated persona, and indulging in him as some kind of special individual: the room in Highmore's house is a shrine to him. Belfour goes on to describe the events as they unfolded:

Mr. Highmore began in very civil terms; and I answered – God knows what! for I felt like an idiot. He said something of meeting you at his house, which I absolutely refused; and upon his pressing to carry some message, I desired it might be, "that I could not yet conquer myself so far as to see you," and that is the truth.

But, Sir, at this time, the devil forsook me; no evasion, no white fib, or the least falsehood could I utter. Why could not I say, "Sir, you are mistaken, I am not the person you take me for," and have persisted to the last? But that would have been an ugly black lie, a thing I

²¹⁷ Barbauld, IV, 349.

²¹⁸ Barbauld, IV, 349.

never am guilty of; and alas! my little deceits all over,
when I come face to face.²¹⁹

Whether Belfour had planned to unveil herself in this way is impossible to determine as there are no other extant letters on the subject, but she certainly engineered the second meeting with Highmore, thus increasing her chances of being discovered. As we see, Belfour found it impossible to tell an outright lie to Highmore, and attributes this to her being face to face with him. The events appear to have happened naturally and calmly, as if she were in conversation with a confidante and they were trying to tease out a means by which to resolve the situation: Highmore suggests something and Belfour refutes it, it is as simple as that. Belfour carries on trying to piece the situation together by implicating into the story her first meeting with Highmore, and assuming that Highmore must have seen her letters to Richardson and had therefore deduced the situation from them. She resigns herself to the fact that ‘what is done, cannot be undone’ and, showing an awareness of the power and austerity of the public, makes one final request of Richardson: that he and ‘Mr. Highmore (or whoever may be in the secret), never to make your correspondent public’.²²⁰ Belfour says that she has gloried in her correspondence with Richardson, and that she has bragged ‘to some select friends’ about it, but in a final attempt to flatter Richardson into forgiveness, she recognises that he is ‘so far my superior in understanding, and an author’, that she will be thought of as ‘conceited, and too self sufficient’ by the public were she to be exposed.²²¹ Even though Highmore has identified her as Richardson’s mystery correspondent she is still not ready to meet him, and asks him not to ‘press it’ as she feels as if she is starting up as a new correspondent and does not ‘know how to proceed.’²²² She asks Richardson to share his thoughts with her, and after signing off as his ‘obliged and faithful (O! that I could say) INCOGNITA’, Belfour clarifies that there is now no need to bother ‘Miss J.’ anymore and that he should direct his reply ‘to me in New Bond-street.’²²³

²¹⁹ Barbault, IV, 350.

²²⁰ Barbault, IV, 351.

²²¹ Barbault, IV, 352.

²²² Barbault, IV, 352.

²²³ Barbault, IV, 352.

Belfour writes again, later the same day, asking Richardson what he meant by ‘the three cruel lines I have just received.’²²⁴ Belfour’s spirits were at a low ebb after ‘what happened yesterday’, and now she is ‘overwhelmed with your severe reprimand’.²²⁵ Their letters had obviously crossed in the post and Richardson had not received Belfour’s letter about her recent disclosure. Belfour does, however, exploit her situation for all it is worth with a stuttering, emotional reply:

“Do I go out often?” Ye—yes, Sir, I do go out often; which I confess, with a meek and humble spirit. If it is a great fault, pray make me sensible of it, for I did not know that I acted blamedly, till you gave me to understand it. I am just going to the tragedy of Merope, and am in excellent crying order’.²²⁶

Belfour reverts back to her role as daughter in this attempt to garner Richardson’s sympathy, and it can only serve as a way of tempering his response. She tells him that she is about to read a tragedy, and is already in the mood to cry so this note will just supplement it. She still signs her name as ‘BELFOUR’.²²⁷

The final letter in the Belfour-Richardson archive is from Richardson and was written on 10 February 1749-50.²²⁸ Although Richardson is in a hurry, he asserts that he has to find the time to reply to her ‘two last billets; the first brought to me two hours ago, and the last just now.’²²⁹ He assures her that he has not ‘seen nor heard from any of Mr. H’s family since last Monday [...] &c. could not therefore know what passed yesterday’, and that the only information he has are from the two letters that she has sent.²³⁰ Richardson still does not know her name, but admits that Joseph Highmore had guessed that it might ‘begin with a B.’²³¹ Richardson tries to calm Belfour by behaving as if little has happened, and carries on constructing his letter in the same playfully argumentative way as before. He tells her that even though he now suspects that Highmore is correct in his assertion, he knows that if this is not the case then his ‘incognita will smile in her

²²⁴ Barbauld, IV, 353. This is a reply to the reprimanding note Richardson sent to her on the 8 February 1749-50.

²²⁵ Barbauld, IV, 353.

²²⁶ Barbauld, IV, 353.

²²⁷ Barbauld, IV, 353.

²²⁸ Barbauld, IV, 354.

²²⁹ Barbauld, IV, 354.

²³⁰ Barbauld, IV, 354.

²³¹ Barbauld, IV, 354.

safety, and at my puzzle', and even brings her favourite, *Clarissa*, into the discussion.²³² Richardson only offers three and a half lines of explanation for his short note a few days earlier, telling her that his intention was 'to amuse, and a little vex you, by sly and saucy hints and intimations', but he also make an attempt to explain his agitated reaction: he had simply thought it unkind of her to make visits to others, flaunt it in front of him, and still not agree to a meeting with him.²³³ Richardson moves toward closing his quick letter by telling Belfour that as he still does not know her name, 'having not heard a syllable of what passed at Mr. H.'s but by your letters', he still intends to continue troubling Miss J. by sending his letters to her there.²³⁴ Richardson finishes his letter by telling Belfour that she still has the 'power to oblige me greatly, by a thorough revealment, which I entirely submit to your own pleasure and manner.'²³⁵ Even though it may appear that Belfour is maintaining her powerful position here, realistically, it is Richardson who is in the coveted position as he offers her the gift of retaining her self-respect. Again, he manages to secure his role as donor rather recipient, by skilfully and painstakingly reversing the role that he began in. The Belfour-Richardson game of cat and mouse sees them continually oscillating between dominant and subordinate player, but the end result always reflects Richardson's position of authority.

The next letter between them is written four days later on 14 February, and is signed 'D. Bradshaigh.'²³⁶ The 'Belfour' pseudonym was at last buried.

Even though the relationship between Richardson and Belfour differs, to some extent, to that of Richardson's relationship with Sarah Wescomb, there are similarities that seem impossible for Richardson to omit. At times the Belfour relationship exhibits a soupcon of familial connection, but on far fewer occasions than with Wescomb. However, what is ubiquitous throughout their early communication is the coquettish playfulness that ensures Richardson's engagement, and prolongs Belfour's anonymity. Richardson is at all times aware of the power of his own celebrity, and the adoring demeanour of his fan.

²³² Barbauld, IV, 355. Richardson reminds Belfour that 'Miss Howe tells Clarissa, that whoever affects secrets, excites curiosity.' (Barbauld, IV, 355)

²³³ Barbauld, IV, 355.

²³⁴ Barbauld, IV, 356.

²³⁵ Barbauld, IV, 356.

²³⁶ Barbauld, IV, 357-359.

CONCLUSION

We have read the greatest part of Richardson's Life and Correspondence. Your criticisms are excellent, and your censures of the indecent passages in your author are highly becoming and highly useful [...] You have made Richardson appear to great advantage, without using any of the unfaithful arts of an editor. You have shown that like other mortals, he had failings; but his enthusiasm for virtue, his generosity, and true politeness of heart and conduct, are brought so distinctly before the eye, that we love the man as much as we admire the author. His invitations to his friends are so kind and so hearty, that we really wish to learn his art of persuading those who he loved to visit him, and we would try it first upon you.¹

Dated 4 September 1804 this passage, taken from a letter written by Richard Lovell Edgeworth to Anna Laetitia Barbauld shortly after the publication of the *Correspondence*, suggests that Barbauld had succeeded in her attempt to elevate the reputation of Richardson through the genre of life writing. To argue that Barbauld's work is devoid of editorial license is patently untrue, as she was as guilty of expurgation as any other editor or biographer might be. However, her skilled determination to produce an extensive piece of work – acceptable to the exacting standards of her boss, Richard Phillips – that not only re-established Richardson in the mind of the nineteenth century reading public, but cemented his position among the hierarchy of the literary elite of the time, is certainly without question.

Barbauld's biography of Richardson pays homage to his life and status, whilst her subsequent selection of letters in some way honours the plethora of fans that he accumulated during the course of his life as a celebrity novelist. Her edition, as an example, originally set out by Richardson in the manuscript letters of early modern fan culture devotes itself to a then new celebrity focussed world. Richardson's fan mail exists largely because of his own desire for recognition and appreciation, and his systematic accruing of letters somehow assuaged this yearning.

¹ Anna Laetitia LeBreton, *Memoir of Mrs. Barbauld, including Letters and Notices of Her Family and Friends* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1894), pp. 94-95.

From the moment that Richard Phillips appointed Anna Barbauld as Editor of the Richardson manuscripts it is evident to see the importance of eminence in the saleability of a literary work at this time. Phillips had identified that in order to sell his latest acquisition he had to secure the employment of a highly popular public figure whose job it was to endorse the eminence of another. Despite the many differences between Barbauld and Richardson, the similarities are both astounding and significant: both shared a desire for literary fame, and Barbauld was a living representation of what Richardson had aspired to become. For all intents and purposes, Anna Barbauld was the ideal candidate for the job. As well as the similarities shared by Richardson and Barbauld, Phillips's use of the media was reminiscent of the methods used by Richardson when selling his novels some fifty years earlier. Overall, the 1804 edition of Richardson's *Correspondence* succeeded for all those involved: Phillips went on to accrue a significant portfolio of work which earned him a knighthood in 1808, Barbauld's career flourished in the realms of literary criticism, and further amplified her renown as a woman of letters, and Richardson's reputation and merit in the eyes of the reading public was resurrected.

The celebrity ideal of Richardson, constructed by Barbauld in her biography of him, may or may not have been a deliberate choice but it nevertheless emerges from the pages, perhaps of its own volition. It is clear that Barbauld writes with her audience very much in mind, as she describes to them the importance of positioning – both literary and social. She presents to them a man who, despite some predictable criticism, was hailed as the latest leading light in eighteenth century literary society, and delivers to them a relatively short – compared to the vast corpus that was available to her – selection of letters from those who adored him. Richardson's well-documented writing, copying, collecting and organising of these letters clearly demonstrates the importance of this collection to him, as they represented his popularity, his fame, and his status as a writer of distinction. Barbauld aims not only to raise Richardson's profile, but also to inject kudos into the eighteenth century genre of romantic fiction, and by and large she succeeds. For Barbauld progress is vital, and this is something that Richardson contributed to in abundance, allowing Barbauld to champion his position as an elite author, worthy of canonical placement.

Richardson is said to have preferred to give than to receive, and whilst his motives might have been truly altruistic this thesis has argued that the concept of altruism is far from being a selfless act.² Through the discoveries of Mauss and Titmuss it is possible to see that with every gift bequeathed by Richardson, like it or not, a return of some description had no choice but to ensue.

To view this collective correspondence as fan mail is to widen the scope for how future scholars of Richardson see his letters, and in doing so keeps the lives of other, perhaps less known, people alive. The letters under discussion here are a collection, an assemblage that is certainly synonymous with the concept of the public persona. For the eighteenth century scholar they offer an example of a group attitude that presents a picture of a fan mentality. We only have to remind ourselves of the work of Busse, Hellekson, Duchesne, and others, who discuss ideas of ‘community-centred creation[s]’ that are ‘done [...] among a group of people’, and a ‘synergy [...] among groups’.³ Richardson, through various means, encouraged his correspondents to communicate with him, often introducing them to each other, before they converged, by invitation only, at his famous grotto for private unpublished readings of his latest work. He created a literary faction, a following, whose focal point was him and his novels. He fashioned an early modern fan club.

In terms of his letter writing – not to mention his various other business commitments – Richardson was a busy man, and we have only to look at the catalogue of letters compiled by Eaves and Kimpel to confirm this, and these will only have been a small, carefully selected number of them. When, in their letters, some of his correspondents complain of Richardson’s tardy replies we have only to look at this list to see that he was responding to a number people at any one time. Richardson was attempting to gratify many, and keep his fan club alive. Richardson enjoyed having a wide network of correspondents throughout Europe, and as we have seen in the introductory chapter to this thesis he was recognised as

² T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp.540-541.

³ *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, ed by Karen Hellekson and Kristin Busse, (North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2006), p. 6. Scott Duchesne, ‘Stardom/Fandom: Celebrity and Fan Tribute Performance’, *Canadian Theatre Review*, 141 (2010) <http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/canadian_theatre_review/v141/141.141.duchesne.html> [accessed 20 April 2010] (p. 21-27).

far away as America. Barbauld's selection shows us that he was a celebrity, with an active and loyal fan base.

APPENDIX

Susanna Highmore's drawing of Richardson's famous 'grotto of instruction'¹

At the beginning of volume two of the *Correspondence*, Barbauld presents her reader with a picture of Richardson in his famous grotto surrounded by some of his fans. The script written on the sketch tells us that in attendance are Mr. Mulso; Mr. Edward Mulso; Miss Mulso, afterwards Mrs. Chapone; Miss Prescott, afterwards Mrs. Mulso; The Revd. Mr. Duncombe; and Miss Highmore, afterwards Mrs. Duncombe. The title is given as: '*Mr. Richardson reading the Manuscript of Sir Charles Grandison in 1751 to his Friends in the Grotto of his House at North End, from a drawing made at the time, by Miss Highmore*'. At the bottom of the page we are informed that it was '*Published May 31-1804, by Richard Phillips, 71 St. Paul's Church Yard.*'

The picture is elegantly drawn by Susanna Highmore, and is set inside the grotto with an outside view, behind the characters, of a green leafy space complete with trees and blue skies. Richardson and two of his attendees (Mr. Mulso and Mr. Edward Mulso) are sat to the left of picture. Richardson, cross-legged, is reading his manuscript to an attentive audience. One of the aforementioned men seems to be saying something, and the other has his left hand inside his waistcoat (Richardson used to walk with his right hand in his waistcoat). To the right of the scene are the others: the lady (Miss Mulso) sat nearest the door is dressed in a long dark dress, an over-dress and hat, and she rests her arm on the table that she shares with Miss Prescott, who is dressed similarly to her. A gentleman (Rev. Duncombe) is sat to her left, and he has his right arm slightly raised as if about to put something into his mouth. Finally, Miss Highmore is sat to the left of Rev. Duncombe and is dressed as the other ladies, but is holding a sketchbook in her left hand while she draws with her right. There are three steps up to the garden. Most of the dress is dark and relatively formal, with the exception of Richardson who, in a state of comparative undress, sentimentally validates himself as truthful and approachable, with an informal outfit which includes a brown beret to match his jacket. Edward Mulso is dressed

¹ John Carroll, ed, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 19.

somewhat more flamboyantly than any of the other figures, in blue breeches, a white waistcoat and a light brown jacket. The interior decoration is done in varying shades of brown.

John Carroll, in 1964, offered his own analysis of the sketch as he describes Highmore's scene as 'a perfect emblem of the bourgeois courts of love' as he takes into consideration the themes of love found in *Sir Charles Grandison*, the 'elegant attitudes' that 'the novelist's admirers' find themselves in, and the real-life love affairs of the younger members of 'the Richardsonian circle'.²

An alternative reading is to look at Highmore's sketch as an example of an eighteenth century reading event, which might nowadays be a paid-for ticketed occasion usually attended by the fan that has a keen interest in the book or its author. Highmore's model of a sociable, but structured gathering is suggestive of a gift giving correlation between the orator (as benefactor) and the listener (as beneficiary). In turn these positions reverse, as Mauss suggests, as the listener repays the orator simply by attending him. Highmore's sketch offers a blueprint for a sociable correspondence that is being played out between the eighteenth century celebrity and his fan; it is a model upon which future scholars might reconsider the ways in which eminent eighteenth century figures interacted with their public.

² Carroll, p.19. Susanna Highmore married John Duncombe, Mary Prescott became Mrs. Thomas Mulso, and Hester Mulso married John Chapone.

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